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THE

AMERICANS AT HOME.

THE

AMERICANS AT HOME;

OR,

BYEWAYS, BACKWOODS, AND PRAIRIES.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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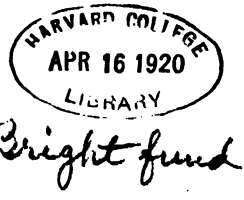

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THE

AMERICANS AT HOME.

I.

THE SWAMP DOCTOR'S STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

It was the spring of 183—, the water from the Mississippi had commenced overflowing the low swamps, and rendering travelling on horseback very disagreeable. The water had got to that troublesome height when it was rather too high for a horse, and not high enough for a canoe or skiff to pass easily over the submerged grounds.

I was sitting out under my favourite oak, congratulating myself that I had no travelling to do just then,—it was very healthy—when my joy was suddenly nipped in the bud by a loud hallo from the opposite side of the bayou. Looking over, and answering the hail, I discerned first a mule, and then something which so closely resembled an ape

or an uran-utan, that I was in doubt whether the voice had proceeded from it, until a repetition of the hail, this time coming unmistakeably from it, assured me that it was a human.

"Massa doctor at home?" yelled the voice.

"Yes, I am the doctor; what do you want?"

"Massa sent me with a letter to you."

Jumping in the skiff, a few vigorous strokes sent me to the opposite shore, where the singular being awaited my coming.

He was a negro dwarf of the most frightful appearance; his diminutive body was garnished with legs and arms of enormously disproportionate length; his face was hideous: a pair of tushes projected from either side of a double hare-lip; and, taking him altogether, he was the nearest resemblance to the uran-utan, mixed with the devil, that human eyes ever dwelt upon. I could not look at him without feeling disgust.

"Massa Bill sent me with a letter," was his reply to my asking him his business.

Opening it, I found a summons to see a patient, the mother of a man named Disney, living some twenty miles distant by the usual road. It was with no good humour that I told the dwarf to wait until I could swim my horse over, and I would accompany him.

By the time I had concluded my preparations, and put a large bottle of brandy in my pocket, my steed was awaiting me upon the opposite shore.

"Massa tole me to tell you ef you didn't mine swimming a little you had better kum de nere way."

"Do you have to swim much?"

"Oh no, massa, onely swim Plurisy Lake, and wade de back water a few mile, you'll save haf de way at leste."

I looked at the sun. It was only about two hours high, and the roads were in such miserable condition that six miles an hour would be making fine speed, so I determined to go the near way, and swim "Pleurisy slough."

"You are certain you know the road, boy?"

"Oh, yes, massa, me know um ebery inch ob de groun'; hunted possum an' coon ober him many a night. Massa, you ain't got any 'baccy, is you?"

"There's a chaw—and here's a drink of brandy. I'll give you another if you pilot me safe through, and a good pounding if you get lost."

"Dank you, massa, um's good. No fere I lose you, know ebery inch of de groun'."

I had poured him out a dram, not consi-

dering his diminutive stature, sufficient to unsettle the nerves of a stout man, but he drank it off with great apparent relish; and by this time, everything being ready, we commenced ploughing our way through the muddy roads.

We made but slow progress. I would dash on, and then have to wait for the dwarf, who, belabouring his mule with a cudgel almost as large as himself, strove in vain to keep up.

The road was directly down the bayou for some miles. There were few settlers on it then, and the extent of their clearing consisted of a corn-patch. They were the pre-emptioners or squatters; men who settled upon government land before its survey, and awaited the incoming of planters with several negroes to buy their claims, themselves to be bought out by more affluent emigrants. To one of the first-mentioned class—the pre-emptioners—my visit was directed, or rather to his mother, who occupied an intermediate grade between the squatter and the small planter, inasmuch as she possessed one negro, the delectable morsel for whom I was waiting every few hundred yards.

It wanted but an hour to sundown when we reached the place where it was optional with me either to go the longer route by the

bayou, or save several miles by cutting across the bend of the stream, having, however, to swim "Pleurisy slough" if I did so.

The path across was quite obscure, and it would be dark by the time we crossed; but the negro declared he knew every inch of the way, and as saving distance was a serious consideration, I determined to try it and "Pleurisy slough."

Taking a drink to warm me, for the dew that had commenced to fall was quite chilling, I gave one to the negro, not noticing the wild sparkle of his eye or the exhilaration of his manner.

We pressed on eagerly, I ahead as long as the path lasted; but it giving out at the edge of the back water, it became necessary for the negro to precede and pilot the way.

I followed him mechanically for some distance, relying on his intimate knowledge of the swamp, our steeds making but slow progress through the mud and water.

When we entered the swamp I had remarked that the sun was in our faces; and great was my astonishment, when we had travelled some time, on glancing my eye upwards to see if it had left the tree-tops, to perceive its last beams directly at my back, the very reverse of what it should have been.

Thinking perhaps that it was some optical illusion, I consulted the moss on the trees, and its indication was that we were taking the back track. I addressed the negro very sharply for having misled me, when, instead of excusing himself, he turned on me his hideous countenance and chuckled the low laugh of drunkenness. I saw that I had given him too much brandy for his weak brain, and that he was too far gone to be of any assistance to me in finding the way.

Mine was a pleasant situation truly. To return home would be as bad as to endeavour to go on; it would be night at any rate before I could get out of the swamp; and after it fell, as there was no moon, it would be dangerous to travel, as the whole country was full of lakes and sloughs, and we might be precipitated suddenly into one of them, losing our animals, if not being drowned ourselves.

It was evident that I would have to pass the night in the swamp, my only companion the drunken dwarf. I had nothing to eat, and no weapons to protect myself if assailed by wild beasts; but the swamp was high enough to preclude the attack of anything but an alligator, and their bellow was resounding in too close proximity to be agreeable.

Fortunately, being a cigar-smoker, I had a box of matches in my pocket, so I would have a fire at least. My next care was to find a ridge sufficiently above the water to furnish a dry place for building a fire and camp. After considerable search, just at nightfall the welcome prospect of a cane ridge above the overflow met my gaze; hurrying up the negro, who by this time was maudlin drunk, I reached the cane, and forcing my way with considerable difficulty through it until I got out of the reach of the water, dismounted, and tying my horse, took the negro down and performed the same office for his mule.

My next care was to gather materials for a fire before impenetrable darkness closed over the swamp; fortunately for me, a fallen oak presented itself not ten steps from where I stood. To have a cheerful blazing fire was the work of a few minutes. Breaking off sufficient cane-tops to last the steeds till morning, I stripped my horse—the mule had nothing on but a bridle—and with the saddle and cane-leaves made me a couch that a monarch, had he been as tired as I was, would have found no fault with. As the negro was perfectly helpless, and nearly naked, I gave him my saddle blanket, and making him a

bed at a respectful distance, bade him go to sleep.

Replenishing the fire with sufficient fuel to last till morning, I lit a cigar, and throwing myself down upon my fragrant couch, gave myself up to reflections upon the peculiarity of my situation. Had it been a voluntary bivouac, with a set of chosen companions, it would not have awakened half the interest in my mind that it did, for the attending circumstances imparted to it much of the romantic.

There, far from human habitation, my only companion a hideous dwarf, surrounded with water, the night draperied darkly around, I lay, the cane-leaves for my bed, the saddle for my pillow; the huge fire lighting up the darkness for a space around, and giving natural objects a strange, distorted appearance, bringing the two steeds into high relief against the dark background of waving cane, which nodded over, discoursing a wild, peculiar melody of its own. Occasionally a loud explosion would be heard as the fire communicated with a green reed; the wild hoot of an owl was heard, and directly I almost felt the sweep of his wings as he went sailing by, and alighted upon an old tree just where the light sank mingling with the darkness. I followed him with my eye, and as he settled

himself, he turned to gaze towards me; I moved one of the logs, and his huge eyes fairly glistened with light, as the flames shot up with increased vigour; the swamp moss was flowing around him in long, tangled masses, and as a more vivid gleam uprose, I gazed and started involuntarily. Had I not known it was an owl surrounded with moss that sat upon that stricken tree, I would have sworn it was the form of an old man, clad in a sombre flowing mantle, his arm raised in an attitude of warning, that I gazed upon. A cane exploding startled the owl, and with a loud "tu whit, tu whoo," he went sailing away in the darkness. The unmelodious bellow of the alligator, and the jarring cry of the heron, arose from a lake on the opposite side of the cane; whilst the voices of a myriad of frogs, and the many undistinguishable sounds of the swamp, made the night vocal with discordancy.

My cigar being by this time exhausted, I took the bottle from my pocket, and taking a hearty drink to keep the night air from chilling me when asleep, was about to restore it to its place, and commend myself to slumber, when, glancing at the dwarf, I saw his eyes fixed upon me with a demoniac expression that I shall never forget.

"Give me a dram," he said very abruptly, not prefacing the request by those deferential words never omitted by the slave when in his proper mind.

"No, sir, you have already taken too much; I will give you no more," I replied.

"Give me a dram," he again said, more fiercely than before.

Breaking off a cane, I told him that if he spoke to me in that manner again I would give him a severe flogging.

But to my surprise he retorted, "D—n you, white man, I will kill you ef you don't give me more brandy!" his eyes flashing and sparkling with electric light.

I rose to correct him, but a comparison of my well-developed frame with his stunted deformed proportions, and the reflection that his drunkenness was attributable to my giving him the brandy, deterred me.

"I will kill you," he again screamed, his fangs clashing, and the foam flying from his mouth, his long arms extended as if to clutch me, and the fingers quivering nervously.

I took a hasty glance of my condition. I was lost in the midst of the swamp, an unknown watery expanse surrounding me; remote from any possible assistance; the swamps were rapidly filling with water, and

if we did not get out to-morrow or next day, we would in all probability be starved or drowned; the negro was my only dependence to pilot me to the settlements, and he was threatening my life if I did not give him more brandy; should I do it or not? Judging from the effects of the two drinks I had given him, if he got possession of the bottle it might destroy him, or at least render him incapable of travelling, until starvation and exposure would destroy us. My mind was resolved upon that subject; I would give him no more. There was no alternative, I would have to stand his assault; considering I was three times his size, a fearful adventure, truly, thought I, not doubting a moment but that my greater size would give me proportionate strength; I must not hurt him, but will tie him until he recovers.

The dwarf, now aroused to maniacal fury by the persistance in my refusal, slowly approached me to carry his threat into execution. The idea of such a diminutive object destroying without weapons a man of my size, presented something ludicrous, and I laughingly waited his attack, ready to tie his hands before he could bite or scratch me. Wofully I underrated his powers!

With a yell like a wild beast's, he preci-

pitated himself upon me; evading my blow, he clutched with his long fingers at my throat, burying his talons in my flesh, and writhing his little body around mine, strove to bear me to earth.

I summoned my whole strength, and endeavoured to shake him off; but, possessing the proverbial power of the dwarf, increased by his drunken mania to an immense degree, I found all my efforts unavailing, and oh! horrors of horrors, what awful anguish was mine, when I found him bearing me slowly to earth, and his piercing talons buried in my throat, cutting off my breath! My eyes met his with a more horrid gleam than that he glared upon me? his was the fire of brutal nature, aroused by desire to intense malignancy; and mine the gaze of despair and death. Closer and firmer his gripe closed upon my throat, barring out the breath. I strove to shriek for help, but could not. How shall I describe the racking agony that tortured me. All kinds of colours first floated before my eyes, and then every thing wore a settled, intensely fiery red. I felt my jaw slowly dropping, and my tongue protruding, till it rested on the fangs that encircled my throat. I could hear distinctly every pulsation of even the minutest artery in my frame.

I remember it all perfectly, for the mind, through all this awful struggle, still remained full of thought and clearness. Closer grew the gripe of those talons around my throat, and I knew that I could live but a few minutes more. I had not a fear of death. But oh! awful were my thoughts at dying in such a way—suffocated in the midst of the noisome swamp, my flesh to be devoured by the carrion crow, my bones to whiten where they lay. I ceased to breathe. I was dead. I had suffered the last pangs of that awful hour, and either it was the soul not yet resigned to leave its human tenement, or else immortal mind triumphing over death, but I still retained the sentient principle within my corpse. I remember distinctly when the demon relaxed his clutch, and shaking me to see if I were really dead, broke into a fiendish laugh. I remember distinctly when tearing the bottle from me, he pulled my limber body off my couch, and stretched himself upon it. And what were my thoughts? I was dead, yet am living now. Ay, dead as human ever becomes. My lungs had ceased to play; my heart was still; my muscles were inactive; even my skin had the dead clammy touch. Had men been there, they would have placed me in a coffin and

buried me in the ground. Hark! there is a storm arising. I hear with my ear, that is pressed on the earth, the thunder of the hurricane. How the trees crash beneath it Will it prostrate those above me? Hark what awful thunder! Ah me! what fierce pang is that piercing my very vitals? There is a glimmering of light before my eyes. Can it be that I the dead am being restored to human life? Another thunder peal! 'tis the stroke of my heart—my blood is red-hot —it comes with fire through my veins—the earth quakes—the mountain is rolling off my chest—I live!—I breathe!—I see!—I hear! —Where am I? Who brought me here? I hear other sounds, but cannot my own voice. Where am I? Ah! I remember, the dwarf strangled me. Hark! where is he? Is that the sunbeam playing over the trees? What noisome odour like consuming flesh is that which poisons the gale? Can that disfigured half-consumed mass be my evil genius?"

I rose up, and staggering, fell again; my strength was nearly gone. I lay until I thought myself sufficiently recruited to stand, and then got up and surveyed the scene. The animals were tied as I left them, and were eating their cane unconcernedly; but fear-

fully my well-nigh murderer had paid for his crime, and awful was the retribution. Maddened by the spirits, he had rushed into the flames, and, in the charred and loathsome mass, nothing of the human remained; he had died the murderer's death and been buried in his grave,—a tomb of fire.

To remain longer in the horrid place was impossible; my throat pained me excessively where the talons had penetrated the flesh, and I could not speak above a whisper. I turned the mule loose, thinking that it would return home, and conduct me out of the swamp. I was not incorrect in my supposition; the creature led me to its owner's cabin. The patient had died during the night.

My account of the dwarf's attack did not surprise the family; he had once, when in a similar condition, made an attack upon his mistress, and would have strangled her had assistance not been near.

His bones were left to bleach where they lay. I would not for the universe have looked again upon the place; and his mistress being dead, there were none to care for giving him the rites of sepulture.

II.

SKATING AGAINST A WOLF.

Of late years the wolves have volunteered their services, by accompanying the teams of the eastern lumberers, in some places, on their way to and from the landing, contributing infinitely more to the fears than conscious security of the teamsters.

Three teams, in the winter of 1844, all in the same neighbourhood, were beset with these ravenous animals. They were of unusually large size, manifesting a most singular boldness, and even familiarity, without the usual appearance of ferocity so characteristic of the animal.

Sometimes one, and in another instance three, in a most unwelcome manner, volunteered their attendance, accompanying the teamster a long distance on his way. They would even jump on the log and ride, and

approach very near the oxen. One of them actually jumped upon the sled, and down between the bars, while the sled was in motion.

Some of the teamsters were much alarmed, keeping close to the oxen, and driving on as fast as possible. Others, more courageous, would run towards and strike at them with their goad-sticks; but the wolves sprang out of the way in an instant. But, although they seemed to act without a motive, there was something so cool and impudent in their conduct that it was trying to the nerves—even more so than an active encounter. For some time after this, fire-arms were a constant part of the teamster's equipage. No further molestation, however, was had from them that season.

During the winter of 1844, being engaged in the northern part of Maine, I had much leisure to devote to the wild sports of a new country. To none of these I was more passionately addicted than that of skating. The deep and sequestered lakes of this northern state, frozen by intense cold, present a wide field to the lovers of this pastime. Often would I bind on my rusty skates, and glide away up the glittering river, and wind each mazy streamlet that flowed on towards

the parent ocean, and feel my very pulse bound with joyous exercise. It was during one of these excursions that I met with an adventure, which, even at this period of my life, I remember with wonder and astonishment.

I had left my friend's house one evening, just before dusk, with the intention of skating a short distance up the noble Kennebeck, which glided directly before the door. The evening was fine and clear. The new moon peered from her lofty seat, and cast her rays on the frosty pines that skirted the shore, until they seemed the realization of a fairy scene. All Nature lay in a quiet which she sometimes chooses to assume, while water, earth, and air, seemed to have sunk into repose.

I had gone up the river nearly two miles, when, coming to a little stream which emptied into the larger, I turned in to explore its course. Fir and hemlock of a century's growth met overhead, and formed an evergreen archway, radiant with frost-work. All was dark within; but I was young and fearless, and as I peered into the unbroken forest, that reared itself to the borders of the stream, I laughed in very joyousness. My wild hurra rang through

the woods, and I stood listening to the echo that reverberated again and again, until all was hushed. Occasionally a night-bird would flap its wings from some tall oak.

The mighty lords of the forest stood as if nought but time could bow them. I thought how oft the Indian hunter concealed himself behind these very trees—how oft the arrow had pierced the deer by this very stream, and how oft his wild halloo had rung for his victory. I watched the owls as they fluttered by, until I almost fancied myself one of them, and held my breath to listen to their distant hooting.

All of a sudden a sound arose, it seemed from the very ice beneath my feet. It was loud and tremendous at first, until it ended in one long yell. I was appalled. Never before had such a noise met my ears. I thought it was more than mortal—so fierce, and amid such an unbroken solitude, that it seemed a fiend from hell had blown a blast from an infernal trumpet. Presently I heard the twigs on the shore snap as if from the tread of some animal, and the blood rushed back to my forehead with a bound that made my skin burn, and I felt relieved that I had to contend with things of earthly and not

spiritual mould, as I first fancied. My energies returned, and I looked around me for some means of defence. The moon shone through the opening by which I had entered the forest, and, considering this the best means of escape, I darted towards it like an arrow. It was hardly a hundred yards distant, and the swallow could scarcely excel my desperate flight; yet, as I turned my eyes to the shore, I could see two dark objects dashing through the underbush at a pace nearly double that of my own. By their great speed, and the short yells which they occasionally gave, I knew at once that they were the much-dreaded grey wolf.

I had never met with these animals, but from the description given of them, I had but little pleasure in making their acquaintance. Their untamable fierceness, and the untiring strength which seems to be part of their nature, render them objects of dread to every benighted traveller.

> "With their long gallop, which can tire
> The hound's deep hate, the hunter's fire."

they pursue their prey, and nought but death can separate them. The bushes that skirted the shore flew past with the velocity of light as I dashed on in my flight. The outlet was

nearly gained; one second more, and I would be comparatively safe, when my pursuers appeared on the bank directly above me, which rose to the height of some ten feet. There was no time for thought; I bent my head and dashed wildly forward. The wolves sprang, but, miscalculating my speed, sprang behind, while their intended prey glided out into the river.

Nature turned me towards home. The light flakes of snow spun from the iron of my skates, and I was now some distance from my pursuers, when their fierce howl told me that I was again the fugitive. I did not look back; I did not feel sorry or glad; one thought of home, of the bright faces awaiting my return, of their tears if they should never again see me, and then every energy of mind and body was exerted for my escape. I was perfectly at home on the ice. Many were the days I spent on my skates, never thinking that at one time they would be my only means of safety. Every half minute an alternate yelp from my pursuers made me but too certain that they were close at my heels. Nearer and nearer they came; I heard their feet pattering on the ice nearer still, until I fancied I could hear their deep breathing. Every nerve and muscle in my frame was stretched to the utmost tension.

The trees along the shore seemed to dance in the uncertain light, and my brain turned with my own breathless speed; yet still they seemed to hiss forth with a sound truly horrible, when an involuntary motion on my part turned me out of my course. The wolves close behind, unable to stop as unable to turn, slipped, fell, still going on far ahead, their tongues lolling out, their white tushes gleaming from their bloody mouths, their dark shaggy breasts freckled with foam; and as they passed me their eyes glared, and they howled with rage and fury. The thought flashed on my mind that by this means I could avoid them, viz., by turning aside whenever they came too near; for they, by the formation of their feet, are unable to run on ice except on a right line.

I immediately acted on this plan. The wolves having regained their feet, sprang directly towards me. The race was renewed for twenty yards up the stream; they were already close on my back, when I glided round and dashed past my pursuers. A fierce growl greeted my evolution, and the wolves slipped upon their haunches and sailed onwards, presenting a perfect picture of helplessness and baffled rage. Thus I

gained nearly a hundred yards each turning. This was repeated two or three times, every moment the wolves getting more excited and baffled, until, coming opposite the house, a couple of stag-hounds, aroused by the noise, bayed furiously from their kennels. The wolves, taking the hint, stopped in their mad career, and after a moment's consideration turned and fled. I watched them till their dusky forms disappeared over a neighbouring hill; then, taking off my skates, I wended my way to the house, with feelings better to be imagined than described.

Such annoyances from these migrating beasts, in the vicinity of logging berths as above named, are of recent date. Up to 1840 I had been much in the wild forests of the north-eastern part of Maine, clearing wild land during the summer and logging in the winter, and up to this time I had never seen a satisfactory evidence of their presence. But since this period they have often been seen, and in such numbers and of such size as to render them objects of dread.

III.

THE GREATEST GOOD OF THE GREATEST NUMBER.

"GENTLEMEN," said the orator, taking off his hat and waving it in a courteous and inviting manner, while he wiped his brow with a faded cotton handkerchief,—"Gentlemen! may I beg your attention for a few moments? You are aware that I do not often draw very largely on your patience, and also that I am not a man who is fond of talking about himself. It is indeed a most unpleasant thing to me to be in a manner forced to advocate my own cause, and nothing short of the desire I feel to have an opportunity of advancing the interest of my friends and neighbours in the legislature would induce me to submit to it."

Somebody groaned, "Oh, Tim, that's tough!"

"Yes, gentlemen! as you observe, it *is* tough; it is a thing that always hurts a man's feelings. But as I was observing, we must go through with whatever is for the good of our country. The greatest good of the greatest number, *I* say!"

By this time the auditory had greatly increased, and comprised indeed nearly all the voters. Mr. Rice went on with increasing animation.

"This is the principle to go upon, and if this was only carried out, we should all have been better off long ago. This is where the legislature wants mending. They always stop short of the right mark. They get frightened, gentlemen! yes, frightened,—scar't! they always have a lot of these small souls among them—souls cut after a scant pattern—souls that are afraid of their own shadows—that object to all measures that would really relieve the people, so they just give the people a taste to keep them quiet, and no more, for fear of what folks a thousand miles off would say! You've heard of the jackass that was scar't at a penny trumpet—well, these jackasses are scar't at what isn't louder than a penny trumpet, nor half so loud."

Here was a laugh, which gave the orator

time to moisten his throat from a tumbler handed up by a friend.

"Now you see, gentlemen, nobody would have said a word against that exemption bill, if everybody was as much in favour of the people as I am. I don't care who knows it, gentlemen, *I* am in favour of the people. Don't the people want relief? And what greater relief can they have than not to be obliged to pay their debts, when they have nothing to pay them with? that is, nothing that they can spare conveniently. I call that measure a half-way measure, gentlemen, —it is a measure that leaves a way open to take a man's property if he happens to have a little laid by—a little of his hard earnings, gentlemen; and you all know what hard earnings are.

"What is the use of having the privilege of making laws if we can't make them to suit ourselves? We might as well be a territory again, instead of a sovereign state, if we are agoing to legislate to favour the people of other states at the expense of our own people. I don't approve of the plan of creditors from other states coming here to take away our property. Folks are very fond of talking about honesty, and good faith, and all that. As to faith they may

talk, but I'm more for works; and the man that works hard and can't pay his debts is the one one that ought to be helped, in my judgment.

"They'll tell you that the man that sues for a debt is owing to somebody else, and wants his money to pay with. Now, *I* say, he's just the man that ought to feel for the other, and not want to crowd him hard up. Besides, if we pass exemption laws, don't we help him too? Isn't it as broad as it's long?"

A murmur of applause.

"Then as to honesty; where'll you find an honest man if not among the people? and such measures are on purpose to relieve the people. The aristocracy don't like 'em perhaps, but who cares what *they* like? They like nothing but grinding the face of the poor."

Here was a shout of applause, and a long application to the tumbler.

"Gentlemen," continued Mr. Rice, "some people talk as if what debts were not paid were lost, but it is no such thing. What one man don't get, t'other keeps; so it's all the same in the long run. Folks ought to be accommodating, and if they are accommodating they won't object to any measures for

the relief of the people, and if they don't want to be accommodating, we'll just make 'em, that's all!

"Some say it's bad to keep altering and altering the laws, till nobody knows what the law is. That's a pretty principle, to be sure! what do we have a legislature for, I should be glad to know, if not to make laws? Do we pay them two dollars and fifty cents a day to sit still and do nothing? Look at the last legislature. They did not hold on above two months, and passed rising of two hundred laws, and didn't work o' Sundays neither! Such men are the men you want, if they'll only carry the laws far enough to do some good.

"Now, gentlemen, I see the poll's open, and I s'pose you want to be off, so I will not detain you much longer. All I have to observe is, that, although I am far from commending myself, I must give you my candid opinion that a certain person who has thrust himself before the public on this occasion is unworthy of the suffrages of a free and enlightened community like this. He's a man that's always talking about doing justice to all, and keeping up the reputation of the state, and a great deal more stuff of the same sort; but it's all humbug! nothing

else; and he has an axe of his own to grind, just like the rest of us. And worse than all, gentlemen, as you very well know, he's one of these teetotallers that are trying to coax free-born Americans to sign away their liberty, and make hypocrites of 'em. I'm a man that will never refuse to take a glass of grog with a fellow-citizen because he wears a ragged coat. Liberty and equality, *I* say —Hurrah for liberty and equality! three cheers for liberty and equality, and down with the teetotallers!"

The orator had been so attentive to the tumbler, that the sincerity of the latter part of his speech at least could not be doubted, and indeed his vehemence was such as to alarm Seymour, who felt already somewhat ashamed of the cause he was bound to advocate, and who feared that a few more tumblers would bring Tim to a point which would render his advocacy unavailing. He therefore sought an opportunity of a few moments' private talk with the candidate, and ventured to hint that if he became so enthusiastic that he could not stand, he would have very little chance of sitting in the legislature.

Now, Mr. Rice liked not such quiet youths as our friend Seymour, and especially in his

present elevated frame did he look down with supreme contempt upon anything in the shape of advice on so delicate a subject, so that Seymour got an answer which by no means increased his zeal in Mr. Rice's service, though he still resolved to do his best to fulfil the wishes of Mr. Hay.

Rice's conduct throughout the day was in keeping with the beginning which we have described, and such was the disgust with which it inspired Seymour, that he at length concluded to quit the field, and tell Mr. Hay frankly that it was impossible for him to further the interests of so unprincipled a candidate.

IV.

ABEL HUCKS IN A TIGHT PLACE.

I WISHES to lay a case before you that I thinks is hard. You see I was born a poor man, and luck has been agin me ever sense I was born; and what's worse, the law has been agin me too. I mout have stole several times, and not been found out, but that's agin my prinsipples. I don't see how them as gets rich by stealing can enjoy their riches—I couldn't do it, and so I wouldn't steal. I mout have lugged and loafed about as some does, but I'm above that too; so I has suffered some in this world, and I allows to suffer some more before I'll either steal or lug. But that's not to the pint—or rather to the *half-pint:* for the worst pint in my case was a *half-pint* to begin with. I 'spose I had drunk about that quantity of the ardent when who should come along but "*Forty-foot*

Houston." Now, Mr. P., it so happens that I am *a low man* in inches, and I can't bear for one of those tall fellows to be looking over my head at something beyond me. Ses I,

"Mr. Houston, look some other course."

Ses he, "What's the matter, Hucks?"

Ses I, "I don't want you to be standin' thar a lookin' over my hed."

"Why," ses he, "Hucks, you are a fool!"

That was enuff; I had allers wanted to *hit* a tall man, and "Forty-foot" was the highest I had ever seen. So I goes up and jags him in the short ribs. Ses he:

"Quit, Hucks!—you are a fool!'

Well, upon that I digs into him agin. Well, then at last Mister Houston gets mad, and takes me by the two arms, and gives me a shake that made my teeth chatter and my eyes strike fire, and he hands me over the fence to a constable, and *he* takes me down to Sabett's cross roads, where the court was held in a masheen (machine) house, and lawyer "Joolus" was employed to defend me. He is a mighty good-harted man, Joolus is, and so is judge Battle that tried me; but there was no chance for me to get off, and so I 'fesses guilty, and Joolus turns *into* beggin the judge. He said I was a

poor unfortunate man, with six children, and a little given to liker; and there was no jail nigher than Charlotte, and it would never do to send me to jail.

"Has you got any stocks here?" ses the judge to the sheriff.

"No, sur," ses the sheriff; "this is the second court ever held in the county of Union, and we ain't reddy with sich things yet."

Well, I felt a bit of relief when I heard the sheriff's anser, and the judge looked down at a piece of paper, and then he says—

"Mr. Clerk, record the judgment of the court. Let Mr. Hucks be confined in the stocks for one hour. And," says he, "Mr. Sheriff, you can come as near as possible to executing the judgment of the court."

"How is that?" says Joolus, flaring up and looking wrathy at the judge. "Your honour don't mean to inflict any unusual punishment?"

"Oh, no!" says the judge, laffin; "the mode of carrying out the sentence is left to the sheriff."

And then all the lawyers laft, but Joolus —and some said "*'fence, Joolus*," and so got madder still, and says, "Mr. Sheriff, I dare you to do that!"

And so they took me out of the court-house on a general laff, and, as the lawyers came along to dinner, thar I was lying with both legs through the crack of a rail fence, and some fellers setting on the fence making sport of me!

And I heard that queer-looking feller, "Ham Jones," say—"Joolus, *look* at your client!"

And then I thought Joolus would have fainted. He turned to the judge, and he says—"My God, judge! I never had a client in sich a fix before!"

And the judge and all of them lawyers laughed out. But I felt hurt—my feelings was hurt as well as my legs. I don't know whether or not you are a lawyer, but I want to know whether it is accordin' to the American constitution, to put a feller's legs through a rail fence because they haven't got stocks in a new county? I want to know, sir! for ef that be according to the constitution, I'll go across the line to South Carolina and help to make a new constitution

V.

THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE.

THERE may be readers who will suppose the annexed recital to be an exaggeration; but at least three hundred persons who were in the capitol of the state of Mississippi on the third day of March, 1846, can testify that this account falls far short of the reality. The clerks of the house, as in duty bound, entered the report of the member from Greene on the journals; but, on the next morning, it was expunged by the house at the request of the member himself.

The best subject which came before the legislature during the session of 1846, was the all-absorbing one in regard to the charter of "McInnis' ferry." The owner of the ferry was a member—himself being the representative of his county of Greene—where the ferry is located; and through all the

trying scenes of getting the charter passed, that honourable representative bore himself in a manner and with a spirit which, to say the least, were remarkable.

On the first broaching of the subject some opposition was made. The representative from Clarke, an adjoining county, conceived that the charter interfered with the rights of other citizens who had ferries on the same river (the Chickasahay), and, on the first reading of the bill, this same representative (Mr. Moody) moved its rejection. This motion brought Mr. Innis to his feet. He had never spoken before; but in this one effort (his maiden speech) he more than compensated for his former remissness.

"I hope" (said he, addressing the house, but not the speaker), "I hope you will not reject my ferry bill. Gentlemen, *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* Them other men that's got ferries near me ain't bound at all. They've got some little trifling flats to git across the river on when they want to go to mill—and when it's convenient for 'em to put a traveller over they do it—and when it ain't they don't. But *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* Ask Mr. Moody; he knows all about it. He knows I've kept ferry there across the Chickasahay for thirty years past. My ferry's right on

the big road to Mobile and everywhere. There's three mails crosses at my ferry. Gentlemen, *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* Mr. Moody knows I live at Leaksville, right at the court-house—and these fellers that keep the other little ferries—they turn my boats loose, and bore auger holes in 'em and sink 'em. I hope, gentlemen, you'll pass my bill. I've just got a letter from my son last night —a telling me that them fellers has been boring more holes in my boat. Gentlemen, *I'm bound to keep a ferry.* I always cross everybody that comes—I'm bound to do it. And I always keep good flats, well painted with tar."

After this appeal and the necessary readings being gone through, the bill passed the house by a large majority, and was sent to the senate.

Here a novel scene occurred—unprecedented, perhaps, in the annals of legislation—even of Mississippi legislation. By a resolution of the senate, the representative from Greene was invited to address that august body upon the merits of his bill, which he did after the manner indicated in the above sketch of his remarks in the house. After the grave senators had sufficiently amused themselves with the matter, they passed the

bill. The worthy representative immediately hurried back to his seat in the house; and, although the clerk was reading in the midst of a document, the delighted member exclaimed,

"Mr. Speaker, my ferry bill has passed the senate, and I want the house to concur!"

A roar of laughter followed this unique announcement.

As soon as the matter in hand was disposed of, there was an obstreperous call by the house that the gentleman from Greene should be heard in regard to his mission to the other branch in the legislature. Mr. McInnis rose and said,

"Mr. Speaker, the senate's passed my bill!"

Speaker: "What! have the senate passed your ferry bill?"

McInnis: "Yes, sir; they've passed it."

Speaker: "Well, I'm very glad to hear that the senate have passed the ferry bill of the gentleman from Greene."

Mr. McInnis proceeded:

"Mr. Speaker, when I went into the senate I told 'em all about my ferry, and some of 'em hopped on my bill."

(Here there were cries of "Who opposed it? Who attacked the ferry bill?")

"Why, sir, Mr. Ramsey did, and Mr.

Labauve, too. Labauve said he was travelling along there once on an electioneering tour, and, like many other politicians, he was out of money; and he said I wouldn't set him over at my ferry, because he hadn't no money. I told him, right before the whole senate, it wasn't so."

Speaker: "That Labauve is a dangerous fellow to talk to in that way."

McInnis: "Yes, sir; he said he would throw a glove at me if he had one."

No reporter, whatever his powers be, could do justice to the various scenes which the house and the senate presented in the progress of the above-mentioned events. The crowding of members and visitors around the seat of the *Greene* representative whenever he rose or opened his mouth—the roars of obstreperous mirth—the painful contortions of the speaker's face, as he vainly strove to keep himself and the house in an orderly frame. These things all defied description—to say nothing of the greatest curiosity of all—the member from Greene himself.

In the course of an hour or so, a message came from the senate, stating, among other acts passed, that they had passed the house bill in regard to the Chickasahay ferry.

The worthy member again rose—

"Mr. Speaker," said he, "I hope you'll now let me have the bill to take to the governor to get him to sign it."

Fortunately, the house was now too busy in discussing some other more important matter, or there would have been another convulsive scene. As it was, there was an incontinent burst of laughter, as sudden as it was universal and overwhelming, and then there was a calm again.

Night came—and new fuel was furnished to feed the slumbering embers of that mirth which had nearly consumed the house during the day. In the morning a petition had been presented from Harrison county, by Mr. McCaughn, praying the legislature to pass a law providing that lawyers might be elected as other officers are, and compensated out of the state treasury—forbidding them to receive private fees, &c., &c. On this petition a committee had been appointed—including, singularly enough, the member from Greene.

Judge then of the surprise of the house at the promptness of Mr. McInnis when, at the night session of the very day he was appointed, he rose in his place and made the following report, which, in due form, was read at the clerk's desk; but was interrupted at the close of every sentence by shouts of

applause and merriment, crowded as the hall was by a brilliant array both of ladies and gentlemen:—

THE REPORT

Of Col. Jack McInnis, from the Select Committee that had Mr. McCaughn's Lawyer Bill put to 'em.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if this house will give me its detention for a few minutes, I think that I can explain this matter.

Mr. McCaughn has introduced a great passel of bills here, which is heredical and null and void, and hasn't got no sense in 'em. He put in a bill here to get up a theorlogical servey of the country, and this my constituents is opposed to, because they think there's no use in it. The people have enough to pay for now that ain't of no account. There has been a good deal of 'citement about my ferry bill; and when I had used up Mr. Moody, and got it into the senate, Laboo had to git up and say that he was at my ferry wonst, and I refused to set him over the river, because he didn't have no money—and I jest told him what he said warn't so. Now, I don't know much about this Laboo, but I don't think he is the clean cat fur, no how.

I give my vues about the pennytensherry

t'other day, and I was right, for the things there does look like they was painted with tar—and I told the truth about it, and you know it.

Now, Mr. McCaughn is a man of great larning; he can write equal to any man in this house, and I'm 'sprized that as smart a man should have such heredical notions. He wanted to have a law passed here for doing away with securities; but he couldn't get that fixed, and then he wanted to get the law turned so that a man would have to ax his wife when he wanted to go a feller's security. Now, I have worked for my plunder, and I'm opposed to all such sort of laws. The legislater has already passed a law giving a man's wife his plunder, and his hard yearnings, and I believe Mr. McCaughn was the cause of it, for it is jest like one of them heredical laws of hizzen, that we have all hearn so much about.

Now, I think this law bill is a rascally bill—for I believe in letting the people get any lawyer he likes, and pay him what he chuses. And if this bill passes, why these heredical candidates would be always treating and fooling the people just to get elected. There is too many rascals as is candidates now, and as sech, I'm agin it.

I'm much obleeched to the legislater for passing my ferry bill. They ought to have passed it, for that man Wally, or somebody else, bored two inch auger holes in my flat, just because I got more ferrying to do than he did; but I've fixed him now, for I've got the best ferry anyhow; and the senate's agreed to it, for all that fellow Laboo went agin it. And if you'll let me have the bill, I will jest take it right down to the governor to sign it. And I will go and raise my sunk ferry boat, and stop the auger holes, and ferry everybody as travels that way; and I'll take the greatest pleasure in crossing the members of this legislater because they passed my bill. But I'm agin McCaughn's bill anyhow, for it is time to stop all sich heredical doctrines.

VI.

SMOKING A GRIZZLY.

"WHAT, you hev never seen a *live* grizzly?" exclaimed an old Oregon gold-digger, with whom we were engaged in a "*bar*" conversation one evening on Jamestown bar.

"Never," said I, in all seriousness, "it has never been my good fortune to encounter one of the beautiful varmints."

"Well, hoss, when you *do*, perhaps it won't be the pleasantest minit you've ever hed, for thar aint no varmint in these hills, nor any whar else I've ben, that kin kick wuss, either round or sideways, than a full grown grizzly."

"But you can easily get out of the way of a clumsy animal like that," said I, provoking the old digger into a yarn of his experience in regard to grizzlys.

"Well, when you kin get out of thur way, little feller, I gives you my advice, to get out quicker; for tho' they aint built raal beautiful for runnin, they *lope* awful smart when thur arter a humin' critter. I was desperate glad to get away from one myself once."

I had provoked him to the edge of a bar story, and knowing from his manner, that his relation of such an occurrence as getting away from a grizzly would be interesting, I tempted him on.

"Where did you say you fell in with him?" inquired I.

"I didn't say I fell in with him anywhar," answered he; "cuss the varmint, he fell in with me, and I'd a leetle ruther hev fell in with Old Nick jest at that minit. I was over thar, two mile 'tother side of the high ridge beyond Sullivan's, lookin' arter that gray mule of mine—and talkin' about wicked things, jest puts me thinkin' what a detarminedly vicious sarpint that gray mule was! Well, I was huntin' her, and arter runnin' over the hill, and shootin' down half a dozen gulches, I began to get out of wind; and set down to bless that gray critter for the many tramps she had given me. I'll swar no lariat 'ud hold her, not ef it was made of

bull-hide an inch thick. I hadn't sot more'n a minit, when I heerd a snort, and a roar, and a growl, and a right smart sprinklin' of fast travelin', all mixed up together. Lookin' up a perpendikelar hill, right behind me, thar I saw comin' my gray mule, puttin' in her best licks, and a few yards behind her was a grizzly, not much bigger than a *yearling*. Many an infernal scrape that mule has taken me into afore, but this was rather the tightest place she ever did get me into. I hadn't a weepun about me, 'cept one of those mean, one-barreled auction pistols; and that hadn't a consarned mite of a load in, and I hadn't nothing to load it with, and no time to put it in, ef I had; and ef it had been loaded, it would't hev been worth a cuss!

You had better believe, boys, that my skin got moist suddint—thar waren't no dry diggins under my red shirt, long afore that grizzly got down the hill. The infarnal mule no sooner seed me than she jest wheeled round and put me atween her and the bar, and stood off to see ef I wouldn't lick him about as easy as as I used to whale her when she got stubborn. Old grizzly drawed up when he seed me, and 'gin to roll his old barrel head about, and grunt, as ef I was mor'n he bargained for; and I'd jest given

him that mule, easy, to hev got off square. As the fellers say at monte, he was a lay out I did't want to bet on.

I commenced backin' out, and wanted to make it a draw game; but he kept shufflin' up to me, and any feller who had been close to his head, would hev giv his whole pile just to get a chance to *cut*. I considered my effects—that pan, rocker and crow-bar—jest as good as ministered upon; and almost felt the coroner sittin' on my body. I stuck my hands into my pockets to see if there warn't a knife about me, and I pulled out half a dozen boxes of *lucifer matches*, that had just been bought that afternoon. I don't know what put it in my head, but I sot a box blazin', an' held it out towards old grizzly, and I reckin you havn't often seen two eyes stick out wusser than his did then. He drew back at least ten yards, and settin' the box down on the airth, I jest moved off about twenty yards in t'other direction. The bar crept up to the lucifers and took a smell, and if the muscles of my jaws hadn't been so tight with fear, I'd hev bursted into a reg'lar snort of laughin' at seein' how he turned up his nose and sniffled. The next minit he retreated at least fifty yards; and then I sot another box of the lucifers, and—

boys, dar you b'lieve it—he gin to *back out!* As soon as I felt I had him skeert, I didn't keer a cuss for a whole drove of grizzlys. I jerked out another box of lucifers, teeched it off, and let out the most onairthly yell that ever woke those diggins, and the way that bar broke into a canter 'ud hev distanced any quarter nag in Christendom! He jest seemed to think that anythin' that could fire up as easy, and smell as bad as me, war rather a delicate subject to kick up a row with. As he was gettin' over the hill, I fairly squeeled out laughin', and I'll swar ef that impudent mule—which was standin' behind me—didn't snicker out too! I looked for a rock to hit her—instead of ketchin her to ride to camp—and the ungrateful critter sot right off in a trot, and left me to walk! I made short time atween that ravine and my tent; for I was awful feer'd that my grizzly was waitin' some place to take a second look at me, and might bring a few older varmints along to get their opinion what kind of critter I wur.

Ah, boys! (said he in conclusion) Providence has helped me out of many a scrape; but it warn't him saved me from the grizzly! Ef it hadn't ben old Satan, or some Dutchman, invented brimstone and lucifer matches,

thar would hev been an end to this critter, and the verdict would hev been—*Died of a Grizzly.*

VII.

THE BEE-TREE.

Among the various settlers of the wide west, there is no class which exhibits more striking peculiarities than that which, in spite of hard work, honesty, and sobriety, still continues hopelessly poor. None find more difficulty in the solution of the enigma presented by this state of things, than the sufferers themselves; and it is with some bitterness of spirit that they come at last to the conclusion, that the difference between their own condition and that of their prosperous neighbours, is entirely owing to their own "bad luck;" while the prosperous neighbours look musingly at the ragged children and squalid wife, and regret that the head of the house "ha'n't no faculty." Perhaps neither view is quite correct.

In the very last place one would have

selected for a dwelling—in the centre of a wide expanse of low, marshy land—on a swelling knoll, which looks like an island—stands the forlorn dwelling of my good friend Silas Ashburn, one of the most conspicuous victims of the "bad luck" alluded to. Silas was among the earliest settlers of our part of the country, and had half a county to choose from when he "located" in the swamp—half a county of as beautiful dale and upland as can be found in the vicinity of the great lakes. But he says there is "very first-rate of pasturing" for his cows (and well there may be, on forty acres of wet grass!) and as for the agues which have nearly made skeletons of himself and his family, his opinion is that it would not have made a bit of difference if he had settled on the highest land in Michi*gan*, since "everybody knows if you've got to have the ague, why you've got to, and all the high land and dry land, and *Queen Ann** in the world, wouldn't make no odds."

Silas does not get rich, nor even comfortably well off, although he works, as he says, "like a tiger." This he thinks is because "rich folks ain't willing poor folks should live," and because he in particular always has such bad luck. Why shouldn't he make

* Quinine.

money? Why should he not have a farm as well stocked, a house as well supplied, and a family as well clothed and cared for in all respects, as his old neighbour John Dean, who came with him from "York State?" Dean has never speculated, nor hunted, nor fished, nor found honey, nor sent his family to pick berries for sale. All these has Silas done, and more. His family have worked hard; they have worn their old clothes till they well nigh dropped off; many a day, nay, month, has passed, seeing potatoes almost their sole sustenance; and all this time Dean's family had plenty of everything they wanted, and Dean just jogged on, as easy as could be; hardly ever stirring from home, except on 'lection days; wasting a great deal of time, too (so Silas thinks), "helping the women folks." "But some people get all the luck."

These and similar reflections seem to be scarcely ever absent from the mind of Silas Ashburn, producing any but favourable results upon his character and temper. He cannot be brought to believe that Dean has made more money by splitting rails in the winter than his more enterprising neighbour by hunting deer, skilful and successful as he is. He will not notice that Dean often buys his

venison for half the money he has earned while Silas was hunting it. He has never observed, that while his own sallow helpmate goes barefoot and bonnetless to the brush-heap to fill her ragged apron with miserable fuel, the cold wind careering through her scanty covering, Mrs. Dean sits by a good fire, amply provided by her careful husband, patching for the twentieth time his great overcoat; and that by the time his Betsey has kindled her poor blaze, and sits cowering over it, shaking with ague, Mrs. Dean, with well-swept hearth, is busied in preparing her husband's comfortable supper.

These things Silas does not and will not see; and he ever resents fiercely any hint, however kindly and cautiously given, that the steady exercise of his own ability for labour, and a *little* mere thrift on the part of his wife, would soon set all things right. When he spends a whole night "'coon-hunting," and is obliged to sleep half the next day, and feels good for nothing the day after, it is impossible to convince him that the "varmint" had better been left to cumber the ground, and the two or three dollars that the expedition cost him been bestowed in the purchase of a blanket.

"A blanket!" he would exclaim angrily;

"don't be puttin' sich uppish notions into my folks' heads! Let 'em make comfortables out o' their old gowns, and if that don't do, let 'em sleep in their day-clothes, as I do! Nobody needn't suffer with a great fire to sleep by."

The children of this house are just what one would expect from such training! Labouring beyond their strength at such times as it suits their father to work, they have nevertheless abundant opportunity for idleness; and, as the mother scarcely attempts to control them, they usually lounge listlessly by the fireside, or bask in the sunshine, when Ashburn is absent; and, as a natural consequence of this irregular mode of life, the whole family are frequently prostrate with agues, suffering every variety of wretchedness, while there is perhaps no other case of disease in the neighbourhood. Then comes the two-fold evil of a long period of inactivity, and a proportionately long doctor's bill; and as Silas is strictly honest, and means to wrong no man of his due, the scanty comforts of the convalescents are cut down to almost nothing, and their recovery sadly delayed, that the heavy expenses of illness may be provided for. This is some of poor Ashburn's "bad luck."

One of the greatest temptations to our friend Silas, and to most of his class, is a bee-hunt. Neither deer, nor 'coons, nor prairie-hens, nor even bears, prove half as powerful enemies to anything like regular business, as do these little thrifty vagrants of the forest. The slightest hint of a bee-tree will entice Silas Ashburn and his sons from the most profitable job of the season, even though the defection is sure to result in entire loss of the offered advantage; and if the hunt prove successful, the luscious spoil is generally too tempting to allow of any care for the future, so long as the "sweet'nin'" can be persuaded to last. "It costs nothing," will poor Mrs. Ashburn observe, "let 'em enjoy it. It isn't often we have such good luck." As to the cost, close computation might lead to a different conclusion; but the Ashburns are no calculators.

It was on one of the lovely mornings of our ever-lovely autumn, so early that the sun had scarcely touched the tops of the still-verdant forest, that Silas Ashburn and his eldest son sallied forth for a day's chopping on the newly-purchased land of a rich settler, who had been but a few months among us. The tall form of the father, lean and gaunt

as the very image of Famine, derived little grace from the rags which streamed from the elbows of his almost sleeveless coat, or flapped round the tops of his heavy boots, as he strode across the long causeway that formed the communication from his house to the dry land. Poor Joe's costume showed, if possible, a still greater need of the aid of that useful implement the needle. His mother is one who thinks little of the ancient proverb which commends the stitch in time; and the clothing under her care sometimes falls in pieces, seam by seam, for want of the occasional aid which is rendered more especially necessary by the slightness of the original sewing; so that the brisk breeze of the morning gave the poor boy no faint resemblance to a tall young aspen,

"With all its leaves fast fluttering, all at once."

The little conversation which passed between the father and son was such as necessarily makes up much of the talk of the poor,—turning on the difficulties and disappointments of life, and the expedients by which there may seem some slight hope of eluding these disagreeables.

"If we hadn't had sich bad luck this

summer," said Mr. Ashburn, "losing that heifer, and the pony, and them three hogs,—all in that plaguey spring-hole too,—I thought to have bought that timbered forty of Dean. It would have squared out my farm jist about right."

"The pony didn't die in the spring-hole, father," said Joe.

"No, he did not, but he got his death there, for all. He never stopped shiverin' from the time he fell in. *You* thought he had the agur, but I know'd well enough what ailded him; but I wasn't a goin' to let Dean know, because he'd ha' thought himself so blam'd cunning, after all he'd said to me about that spring-hole. If the agur could kill, Joe, we'd all ha' been dead long ago."

Joe sighed,—a sigh of assent. They walked on musingly.

"This is going to be a good job of Keene's," continued Mr. Ashburn, turning to a brighter theme, as they crossed the road and struck into the "timbered land," on their way to the scene of the day's operations. "He has bought three eighties, all lying close together, and he'll want as much as one forty cleared right off; and I've a good notion to take the fencin' of it as well as the choppin'. He's got plenty of money; and they say he

don't shave quite so close as some. But I tell you, Joe, if I do take the job, you must turn to like a catamount, for I ain't a-going to make a nigger o' myself, and let my children do nothing but eat."

"Well, father," responded Joe, whose pale face gave token of anything but high living, "I'll do what I can; but you know I never work two days at choppin' but what I have the agur like sixty,—and a feller can't work when he's got the agur."

"Not while the fit's on, to be sure," said the father; "but I've worked many an afternoon after my fit was over, when my head felt as big as a half-bushel, and my hands would ha' sizzed if I'd put 'em in water. Poor folks has got to work——but, Joe! if there isn't bees, by golley! I wonder if anybody's been a baitin' for 'em? Stop! hush! watch which way they go!"

And with breathless interest—forgetful of all troubles, past, present, and future—they paused to observe the capricious wheelings and flittings of the little cluster, as they tried every flower on which the sun shone, or returned again and again to such as suited best their discriminating taste. At length, after a weary while, one suddenly rose into the air with a loud whizz, and after balancing

a moment on a level with the tree-tops, darted off, like a well-sent arrow, towards the east, followed instantly by the whole busy company, till not a loiterer remained.

"Well! if this isn't luck!" exclaimed Ashburn, exultingly; "they make right for Keene's land! We'll have 'em! go ahead, Joe, and keep your eye on 'em!"

Joe obeyed so well in both points that he not only outran his father, but very soon turned a summerset over a gnarled root or *grub* which lay in his path. This *faux pas* nearly demolished one side of his face, and what remained of his jacket sleeve, while his father, not quite so heedless, escaped falling, but tore his boot almost off with what he called "a contwisted stub of the toe."

But these were trifling inconveniences, and only taught them to use a little more caution in their eagerness. They followed on, unweariedly; crossed several fences, and threaded much of Mr. Keene's tract of forest land, scanning with practised eye every decayed tree, whether standing or prostrate, until at length, in the side of a gigantic but leafless oak, they espied, some forty feet from the ground, the "sweet home" of the immense swarm whose scouts had betrayed their hiding place.

"The Indians have been here," said Ashburn; "you see they've felled this saplin' agin the bee-tree, so as they could climb up the hole; but the red devils have been disturbed before they had time to dig it out. If they'd had axes to cut down the big tree, they wouldn't have left a smitchin o' honey, they're such tarnal thieves!"

Mr. Ashburn's ideas of morality were much shocked at the thought of the dishonesty of the Indians, who, as is well known, have no rights of any kind; but considering himself as first finder, the lawful proprietor of this much-coveted treasure, gained too without the trouble of a protracted search, or the usual amount of baiting, and burning of honey-combs, he lost no time in taking possession after the established mode.

To cut his initials with his axe on the trunk of the bee-tree, and to make *blazes* on several of the trees he had passed, to serve as way-marks to the fortunate spot, detained him but a few minutes; and with many a cautious noting of the surrounding localities, and many a charge to Joe "not to say nothing to nobody," Silas turned his steps homeward, musing on the important fact that he had had good luck for once, and planning important business quite foreign to the day's chopping.

Now it so happened that Mr. Keene, who is a restless old gentleman, and, moreover, quite green in the dignity of a land-holder, thought proper to turn his horse's head, for this particular morning ride, directly towards these same "three eighties," on which he had engaged Ashburn and his son to commence the important work of clearing. Mr. Keene is low of stature, rather globular in contour, and exceedingly parrot-nosed; wearing, moreover, a face red enough to lead one to suppose he had made his money as a dealer in claret; but, in truth, one of the kindest of men, in spite of a little quickness of temper. He is profoundly versed in the art and mystery of store-keeping, and as profoundly ignorant of all that must sooner or later be learned by every resident land-owner of the western country.

Thus much being premised, we shall hardly wonder that our good old friend felt exceedingly aggrieved at meeting Silas Ashburn and the "lang-legged chiel" Joe (who has grown longer with every shake of ague), on his way *from* his tract, instead of *to* it.

"What in the world's the matter now?" began Mr. Keene, rather testily. "Are you never going to begin that work?"

"I don't know but I shall;" was the

cool reply of Ashburn; "I can't begin to-day, though."

"And why not, pray, when I've been so long waiting?"

"Because I've got something else that must be done first. You don't think your work is all the work there is in the world, do you?"

Mr. Keene was almost too angry to reply, but he made an effort to say, "When am I to expect you, then?"

"Why, I guess we'll come on in a day or two, and then I'll bring both the boys."

So saying, and not dreaming of having been guilty of an incivility, Mr. Ashburn passed on, intent only on his bee-tree.

Mr. Keene could not help looking after the ragged pair for a moment, and he muttered angrily as he turned away, "Ay! pride and beggary go together in this confounded new country! You feel very independent, no doubt, but I'll try if I can't find somebody that wants money."

And Mr. Keene's pony, as if sympathizing with his master's vexation, started off at a sharp, passionate trot, which he had learned, no doubt, under the habitual influence of the spicy temper of his rider.

To find labourers who wanted money, or

who would own that they wanted it, was at that time no easy task. Our poorer neighbours have been so little accustomed to value household comforts, that the opportunity to obtain them presents but feeble incitement to that continuous industry which is usually expected of one who works in the employ of another. However, it happened in this case that Mr. Keene's star was in the ascendant, and the woods resounded ere long under the sturdy strokes of several choppers.

The Ashburns, in the mean time, set themselves busily at work to make due preparations for the expedition which they had planned for the following night. They felt, as does every one who finds a bee-tree in this region, that the prize was their own—that nobody else had the slightest claim to its rich stores; yet the gathering in of the spoils was to be performed, according to the invariable custom where the country is much settled, in the silence of night, and with every precaution of secrecy. This seems inconsistent, yet such is the fact.

The remainder of the "lucky" day, and the whole of the succeeding one, passed in scooping troughs for the reception of the honey,—tedious work at best, but unusually so in this instance, because several of the

family were prostrate with the ague. Ashburn's anxiety lest some of his customary bad luck should intervene between discovery and possession, made him more impatient and harsh than usual; and the interior of that comfortless cabin would have presented to a chance visitor, who knew not of the golden hopes which cheered its inmates, an aspect of unmitigated wretchedness. Mrs. Ashburn sat almost in the fire, with a tattered hood on her head, and the relics of a bed-quilt wrapped about her person; while the emaciated limbs of the baby on her lap,—two years old, yet unweaned,—seemed almost to reach the floor, so preternaturally were they lengthened by the stretches of a four months' ague. Two of the boys lay in the trundle-bed, which was drawn as near to the fire as possible; and every spare article of clothing that the house afforded was thrown over them, in the vain attempt to warm their shivering frames. "Stop your whimperin', can't ye!" said Ashburn, as he hewed away with hatchet and jack-knife; "you'll be hot enough before long." And when the fever came his words were more than verified.

Two nights had passed before the preparations were completed. Ashburn and such of

his boys as could work had laboured indefatigably at the troughs, and Mrs. Ashburn had thrown away the milk, and the few other stores which cumbered her small supply of household utensils, to free as many as possible for the grand occasion. This third day had been "well day" to most of the invalids, and, after the moon had risen to light them through the dense wood, the family set off, in high spirits, on their long, dewy walk. They had passed the causeway, and were turning from the highway into the skirts of the forest, when they were accosted by a stranger, a young man in a hunter's dress, evidently a traveller, and one who knew nothing of the place or its inhabitants, as Mr. Ashburn ascertained, to his entire satisfaction, by the usual number of queries. The stranger, a handsome youth of one or two and twenty, had that frank joyous air which takes so well with us wolverines; and after he had fully satisfied our bee-hunter's curiosity, he seemed disposed to ask some questions in his turn. One of the first of these related to the moving cause of the procession and their voluminous display of *containers*.

"Why, we're goin' straight to a bee-tree that I lit upon two or three days ago, and if

you've a mind to, you may go 'long, and welcome. It's a real peeler, I tell ye. There's a hundred and fifty weight of honey in it, if there's a pound."

The young traveller waited no second invitation. His light knapsack was but small incumbrance, and he took upon himself the weight of several troughs, that seemed too heavy for the weaker members of the expedition. They walked on at a rapid and steady pace for a good half hour, over paths which were none of the smoothest, and only here and there lighted by the moonbeams. The mother and children were but ill-fitted for the exertion, but Aladdin, on his midnight way to the wondrous vault of treasure, would as soon have thought of complaining of fatigue.

Who shall describe the astonishment, the almost breathless rage of Silas Ashburn,—the bitter disappointment of the rest,—when they found, instead of the bee-tree, a great gap in the dense forest, and the bright moon shining on the shattered fragments of the immense oak that had contained their prize? The poor children, fainting with toil now that the stimulus was gone, threw themselves on the ground; and Mrs. Ashburn, seating her wasted form on a huge branch, burst into tears.

"It's all one!" exclaimed Ashburn, when at length he could find words; "it's all alike! this is just my luck! It ain't none of my neighbours' work, though! They know better than to be so mean! It's the rich! Them that begrudges the poor man the breath of life!" And he cursed bitterly and with clenched teeth whoever had robbed him of his right.

"Don't cry, Betsey," he continued; "let's go home. I'll find out who has done this, and I'll let 'em know there's a law for the poor man as well as the rich. Come along, young 'uns, and stop your blubberin', and let them splinters alone!" The poor little things were trying to gather up some of the fragments to which the honey still adhered, but their father was too angry to be kind.

"Was the tree on your own land?" now enquired the young stranger, who had stood by in sympathizing silence during this scene.

"No! but that don't make any difference. The man that found it first, and marked it, had a right to it afore the president of the United States, and that I'll let 'em know, if it costs me my farm. It's on old Keene's land, and I shouldn't wonder if the old miser had done it himself,—but I'll let him know what's the law in Michi*gan!*"

"Mr. Keene a miser!" exclaimed the young stranger, rather hastily.

"Why, what do *you* know about him?"

"O! nothing!—that is, nothing very particular—but I have heard him well spoken of. What I was going to say was, that I fear you will not find the law able to do anything for you. If the tree was on another person's property——"

"Property! that's just so much as you know about it!" replied Ashburn, angrily. "I tell ye I know the law well enough, and I know the honey was mine—and old Keene shall know it too, if he's the man that stole it."

The stranger politely forbore further reply, and the whole party walked on in sad silence till they reached the village road, when the young stranger left them with a kindly "good night!"

It was soon after an early breakfast on the morning which succeeded poor Ashburn's disappointment, that Mr. Keene, attended by his lovely orphan niece Clarissa Bensley, was engaged in his little court-yard, tending with paternal care the brilliant array of autumnal flowers which graced its narrow limits. Beds, in size and shape nearly resembling patty-pans, were filled to overflowing

with dahlias, china-asters, and marigolds, while the walks which surrounded them, daily "swept with a woman's neatness," set off to the best advantage these resplendent children of Flora. A vine-hung porch, that opened upon the miniature Paradise, was lined with bird-cages of all sizes, and on a yard-square grass-plot stood the tin cage of a squirrel, almost too fat to be lively.

Mr. Keene was childless, and consoled himself, as childless people are apt do if they are wise, by taking into favour, in addition to his destitute niece, as many troublesome pets as he could procure. His wife, less philosophical, expended her superfluous energies upon a multiplication of household cares which her ingenuity alone could have devised within a domain like a nut-shell. Such rubbing and polishing—such arranging and rearranging of useless nick-nacks, had never yet been known in these utilitarian regions. And, what seemed amusing enough, Mrs Keene, whose time passed in laborious nothings, often reproved her lawful lord very sharply for wasting *his* precious hours upon birds and flowers, squirrels and guinea-pigs, to say nothing of the turkeys and the magnificent peacock, which screamed at least half of every night, so that his master was

fain to lock him up in an outhouse, for fear the neighbours should kill him in revenge for the murder of their sleep. These forms of solace Mrs. Keene often condemned as "really ridic'lous," yet she cleaned the bird-cages with indefatigable punctuality, and seemed never happier than when polishing with anxious care the bars of the squirrel's tread-mill. But there was one never-dying subject of debate between this worthy couple —the company and services of the fair Clarissa, who was equally the darling of both, and superlatively useful in every department which claimed the attention of either. How the maiden, light-footed as she was, ever contrived to satisfy both uncle and aunt, seemed really mysterious. It was, "Mr. Keene, don't keep Clary wasting her time there when I've *so much* to do!"—or, on the other hand, "My dear! do send Clary out to help *me* a little! I'm sure she's been stewing there long enough!" And Clary, though she could not perhaps be in two places at once, certainly accomplished as much as if she could.

On the morning of which we speak, the young lady, having risen very early, and brushed and polished to her aunt's content, was now busily engaged in performing the

various behests of her uncle, a service much more to her taste. She was as completely at home among birds and flowers as a poet or a Peri; and not Ariel himself (of whom I dare say she had never heard) accomplished with more grace his gentle spiriting. After all was "perform'd to point,"—when no dahlia remained unsupported,—no cluster of many-hued asters without its neat hoop,—when no intrusive weed could be discerned, even through Mr. Keene's spectacles,—Clarissa took the opportunity to ask if she might take the pony for a ride,—

"To see those poor Ashburns, uncle."

"They're a lazy impudent set, Clary."

"But they are all sick, uncle; almost every one of the family down with ague. Do let me go and carry them something. I hear they are completely destitute of comforts."

And so they ought to be, my dear," said Mr. Keene, who could not forget what he consid red Ashburn's impertinence.

But his habitual kindness prevailed, and he concluded his remonstrance (after giving voice to some few remarks which would not have gratified the Ashburns particularly) by saddling the pony himself, arranging Clarissa's riding-dress with all the assiduity

of a gallant cavalier, and giving into her hand, with her neat silver-mounted whip, a little basket, well crammed by his wife's kind care with delicacies for the invalids. No wonder that he looked after her with pride as she rode off! There are few prettier girls than the bright-eyed Clarissa.

When the pony reached the log-causeway, just where the thick copse of witch-hazel skirts Mr. Ashburn's moist domain, some unexpected occurrence is said to have startled, not the sober pony, but his very sensitive rider; and it has been asserted that the pony stirred not from the said hazel screen for a longer time than it would take to count a hundred, very deliberately. What faith is to be attached to this rumour, the historian ventures not to determine. It may be relied on as a fact, however, that a strong arm led the pony over the slippery corduroy, but no further; for Clarissa Bensley cantered alone up the green slope which leads to Mr. Ashburn's door.

"How are you this morning, Mrs. Ashburn?" asked the young visitant as she entered the wretched den, her little basket on her arm, her sweet face all flushed, and her eyes more than half suffused with tears, the effect of the keen morning wind, we suppose.

"Law sakes alive!" was the reply, "I ain't no how. I'm clear tuckered out with these young 'uns. They have had the agur already this morning, and they're as cross as bear cubs."

"Ma!" screamed one, as if in confirmation of the maternal remark, "I want some tea!"

"Tea! I ha'n't got no tea, and you know that well enough!"

"Well, give me a piece o' sweetcake then, and a pickle."

"The sweetcake has gone long ago, and I ha'n't nothing to make more—so shut your head!" and as Clarissa whispered to the poor pallid child that she would bring him some if he would be a good boy and not tease his mother, Mrs. Ashburn produced, from a parcel of similar delicacies, a yellow cucumber, something less than a foot long, "pickled" in whiskey and water—and this the child began devouring eagerly.

Miss Bensley now set out upon the table the varied contents of her basket. "This honey," she said, showing some as limpid as water, "was found a day or two ago in uncle's woods—wild honey—isn't it beautiful?"

Mrs. Ashburn fixed her eyes on it without

speaking, but her husband, who just then came in, did not command himself so far. "Where did you say you got that honey?" he asked.

"In our woods," repeated Clarissa; I never saw such quantities; and a good deal of it as clear and beautiful as this."

"I thought as much!" said Ashburn angrily; "and now, Clara Bensley," he added, "you'll just take that cursed honey back to your uncle, and tell him to keep it, and eat it, and I hope it will choke him! and if I live, I'll make him rue the day he ever touched it."

Miss Bensley gazed on him, lost in astonishment. She could think of nothing but that he had gone suddenly mad, and this idea made her instinctively hasten her steps towards the pony.

"Well! if you won't take it, I'll send it after ye!" cried Ashburn, who had lashed himself into a rage; and he hurled the little jar, with all the force of his powerful arm, far down the path by which Clarissa was about to depart, while his poor wife tried to restrain him with a piteous "Oh, father! don't! don't!"

Then, recollecting himself a little,—for he was far from being habitually brutal,—he

made an awkward apology to the frightened girl.

"I ha'n't nothing agin *you*, Miss Bensley; you've always been kind to me and mine; but that old devil of an uncle of yours, that can't bear to let a poor man live,—I'll larn him who he's got to deal with! Tell him to look out, for he'll have reason!"

He held the pony while Clarissa mounted, as if to atone for his rudeness to herself; but he ceased not to repeat his denunciations against Mr. Keene as long as she was within hearing. As she paced over the logs, Ashburn, his rage much cooled by this ebullition, stood looking after her.

"I swan!" he exclaimed; "if there ain't that very feller that went with us to the bee-tree, leading Clary Bensley's horse over the cross-way!"

Clarissa felt obliged to repeat to her uncle the rude threats which had so much terrified her; and it needed but this to confirm Mr. Keene's suspicious dislike of Ashburn, whom he had already learned to regard as one of the worst specimens of western character that had yet crossed his path. He had often felt the vexations of his new position to be almost intolerable, and was disposed to imagine himself the predestined victim of all the ill-

will and all the impositions of the neighbourhood. It unfortunately happened, about this particular time, that he had been more than usually visited with disasters which are too common in a new country to be much regarded by those who know what they mean. His fences had been thrown down, his cornfield robbed, and even the lodging-place of the peacock forcibly attempted. But from the moment he discovered that Ashburn had a grudge against him, he thought neither of unruly oxen, mischievous boys, nor exasperated neighbours, but concluded that the one unlucky house in the swamp was the ever-welling fountain of all this bitterness. He had not yet been long enough among us to discern how much our "bark is waur than our bite."

And, more unfortunate still, from the date of this unlucky morning call (I have long considered morning calls particularly unlucky), the fair Clarissa seemed to have lost all her sprightliness. She shunned her usual haunts, or if she took a walk, or a short ride, she was sure to return sadder than she went. Her uncle noted the change immediately, but forbore to question her, though he pointed out the symptoms to his more obtuse lady with a request that she would "find out

what Clary wanted." In the performance of this delicate duty, Mrs. Keene fortunately limited herself to the subjects of health and new clothes,—so that Clarissa, though at first a little fluttered, answered very satisfactorily without stretching her conscience.

"Perhaps it's young company, my dear," continued the good woman; "to be sure there's not much of that as yet; but you never seemed to care for it when we lived at L——. You used to sit as contented over your work or your book, in the long evenings, with nobody but your uncle and me, and Charles Darwin—why can't you now?"

"So I can, dear aunt," said Clarissa; and she spoke the truth so warmly that her aunt was quite satisfied.

It was on a very raw and gusty evening, not long after the occurrences we have noted, that Mr. Keene, with his handkerchief carefully wrapped round his chin, sallied forth after dark, on an expedition to the post-office. He was thinking how vexatious it was—how like everything else in this disorganized, or rather unorganized new country, that the weekly mail should not be obliged to arrive at regular hours, and those early enough to allow of one's getting one's letters before dark. As he proceeded he became aware of

the approach of two persons, and, though it was too dark to distinguish faces, he heard distinctly the dreaded tones of Silas Ashburne.

"No! I found you were right enough there! I couldn't get at him that way; but I'll pay him for him yet!"

He lost the reply of the other party in this iniquitous scheme, in the rushing of the wild wind which hurried him on his course; but he had heard enough! He made out to reach the office, and receiving his paper, and hastening desperately homeward, had scarcely spirits enough even to read the price-current (though he did mechanically glance at that corner of the "Trumpet of Commerce"), before he retired to bed in meditative sadness; feeling quite unable to await the striking of nine on the kitchen clock, which, on all ordinary occasions, "toll'd the hour for retiring."

It is really surprising the propensity which young people have for sitting up late! Here was Clarissa Bensley, who was so busy all day that one would have thought she might be glad to retire with the chickens,—here she was, sitting in her aunt's great rocking-chair by the remains of the kitchen fire, at almost ten o'clock at night! And such a

night too! The very roaring of the wind was enough to have affrighted a stouter heart than hers, yet she scarcely seemed even to hear it! And how lonely she must have been! Mr. and Mrs. Keene had been gone an hour, and in all the range of bird-cages that lined the room, not a feather was stirring, unless it might have been the green eyebrow of an old parrot, who was slily watching the fireside with one optic, while the other pretended to be fast asleep. And what was old Poll watching? We shall be obliged to tell tales.

There was another chair besides the great rocking-chair—a high-backed chair of the olden time; and this second chair was drawn up quite near the first, and on the back of the tall antiquity leaned a young gentleman. This must account for Clary's not being terrified, and for the shrewd old parrot's staring so knowingly.

"I will wait no longer," said the stranger, in a low, but very decided tone (and as he speaks, we recognise the voice of the young hunter). "You are too timid, Clarissa, and you don't do your uncle justice. To be sure he was most unreasonably angry when we parted, and I am ashamed to think that I was angry too. To-morrow I will see him

and tell him so; and I shall tell him too, little trembler, that I have you on my side; and we shall see if together we cannot persuade him to forget and forgive."

This, and much more that we shall not betray, was said by the tall young gentleman, who, now that his cap was off, showed brow and eyes such as are apt to go a good way in convincing young ladies; while Miss Bensley seemed partly to acquiesce, and partly to cling to her previous fears of her uncle's resentment against his former protégé, which, first excited by some trifling offence, had been rendered serious by the pride of the young man and the pepperiness of the old one.

When the moment came which Clarissa insisted should be the very last of the stranger's stay, some difficulty occurred in unbolting the kitchen door, and Miss Bensley proceeded with her guest through an open passage-way to the front part of the house, when she undid the front door, and dimissed him with a strict charge to tie up the gate just as he found it, lest some unlucky chance should realize Mr. Keene's fears of nocturnal invasion. And we must leave our perplexed heroine standing, in meditative mood, candle in hand, in the very centre of the little par-

lour, which served both for entrance-hall and *salon.*

We have seen that Mr. Keene's nerves had received a terrible shock on this fated evening, and it is certain that, for a man of sober imagination, his dreams were terrific. He saw Ashburn, covered from crown to sole with a buzzing shroud of bees, trampling on his flower-beds, tearing up his honey-suckles root and branch, and letting his canaries and Java sparrows out of their cages; and, as his eyes recoiled from this horrible scene, they encountered the shambling form of Joe, who, besides aiding and abetting in these enormities, was making awful strides, axe in hand, towards the sanctuary of the pea-fowls.

He awoke with a cry of horror, and found his bed-room full of smoke. Starting up in agonized alarm, he awoke Mrs. Keene, and half-dressed by the red light which glimmered around them, they rushed together to Clarissa's chamber. It was empty. To find the stairs was the next thought, but at the very top they met the dreaded bee-finder armed with a prodigious club!

"Oh mercy! don't murder us," shrieked Mrs. Keene, falling on her knees; while her husband, whose capsicum was completely

roused, began pummelling Ashburn as high as he could reach, bestowing on him at the same time, in no very choice terms his candid opinion as to the propriety of setting people's houses on fire, by way of revenge.

"Why, you're both as crazy as loons!" was Mr. Ashburn's polite exclamation, as he held Mr. Keene at arm's length. "I was comin' up o' purpose to tell you that you needn't be frightened. It's only the ruff o' the shanty there,—the kitchen as you call it."

"And what have you done with Clarissa?" —"Ay! where's my niece?" cried the distracted pair.

"Where is she? why down stairs to be sure, takin' care o' the traps they throw'd out o' the shanty. I was out a 'coon-hunting, and see the light, but I was so far off that they'd got it pretty well down before I got here. That 'ere young spark o' Clary's worked like a beaver, I tell ye!"

It must be supposed that one half of Ashburn's hasty explanation "penetrated the interior" of his hearers' heads. They took in the idea of Clara's safety, but as for the rest, they concluded it only an effort to mystify them as to the real cause of the disaster.

"You need not attempt," solemnly began

Mr. Keene, "you need not think to make me believe, that you're not the man that set my house on fire. I know your revengful temper; I have heard of your threats, and you shall answer for all, sir! before you are a day older!"

Ashburn seemed struck dumb, between his involuntary respect for Mr. Keene's age and character, and the contemptuous anger with which his accusations filled him. "Well! I swan!" said he, after a pause; "but here Clary; *she's* got common sense; ask her how the fire happened."

"It's all over now, uncle," she exclaimed, almost breathless; it has not done so *very* much damage."

"Damage!" said Mrs. Keene, dolefully "we shall never get things clean again while the world stands!"

"And where are my birds?" inquired the old gentlemen.

"All safe—quite safe; we moved them into the parlour."

"We! who, pray?"

"Oh! the neighbours came, you know, uncle; and—Mr. Ashburn—"

"Give the devil his due," interposed Ashburn; "you know very well that the whole concern would have gone if it hadn't been for that young feller."

"What young feller? where?"

"Why, here," said Silias, pulling forward our young stranger; "this here chap."

"Young man," began Mr. Keene,—but at the moment, up came somebody with a light, and while Clarissa had disappeared behind Mr. Ashburn, the stranger was recognised by her aunt and uncle as Charles Darwin.

"Charles! what on earth brought you here?"

"Ask Clary," said Ashburn, with grim jocoseness.

Mr. Keene turned mechanically to obey,—but Clarissa had disappeared.

"Well! I guess I can tell you something about it, if nobody else wont," said Ashburn, "I'm something of a Yankee, and it's my notion that there was some sparkin' a goin' on in your kitchen, and that somehow or other the young folks managed to set it a-fire."

The old folks looked more puzzled than ever. "*Do* speak, Charles, said Mr. Keene; "what *does* it all mean? Did you set my house on fire?"

"I'm afraid I must have had some hand in it, sir," said Charles, whose self-possession seemed quite to have deserted him.

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Keene, "and I've been laying it to this man!"

"Yes! you know'd I owed you a spite, on account o' that plaguy bee-tree," said Ashburn, "a guilty conscience needs no accuser. But you was much mistaken if you thought I was such a bloody-minded villain as to burn your gimcrackery for that! If I could have paid you for it, fair and even, I'd ha' done it with all my heart and soul. But I don't set men's houses a-fire when I get mad at 'em."

"But you threatened vengeance," said Mr. Keene.

"So I did, but that was when I expected to get it by law, though; and this here young man knows that, if he'd only speak."

Thus adjured, Charles did speak, and so much to the purpose that it did not take many minutes to convince Mr. Keene that Ashburn's evil-mindedness was bounded by the limits of the law, that precious privilege of Wolverine. But there was still the mystery of Charles's apparition, and in order to its unravelment, the blushing Clarissa had to be enticed from her hiding-place, and brought to confession. And then it was made clear that she with all her innocent looks, was the moving cause of the

mighty mischief. She it was who encouraged Charles to believe that her uncle's anger would not last for ever; and this had led Charles to venture into the neighbourhood; and it was while consulting together, (on this particular point, of course), that they managed to set the kitchen curtain on fire, and then—the reader knows the rest.

These things occupied some time in explaining,—but they were at length, by the aid of words and more eloquent blushes, made so clear, that Mr. Keene concluded, not only to new roof the kitchen, but to add a very pretty wing to one side of the house. And at the present time, the steps of Charles Darwin, when he returns from a surveying tour, seek the little gate as naturally as if he had never lived anywhere else. And the sweet face of Clarissa is always there, ready to welcome him, though she still finds plenty of time to keep in order the complicated affairs of both uncle and aunt.

And how goes life with our friends the Ashburns? Mr. Keene has done his very best to atone for his injurious estimate of Wolverine honour, by giving constant employment to Ashburn and his sons, and owning himself always the obliged party, without which concession all he could do would avail

ıing. And Mrs. Keene and Clarissa have ı unwearied in their kind attentions to family, supplying them with so many forts that most of them have got rid of ague, in spite of themselves. The house assumed so cheerful an appearance that uld scarcely recognise it for the same ılid den it had often made my heart ache ɔok upon. As I was returning from my visit there, I encountered Mr. Ashburn, remarked to him how very comfortable r seemed.

Yes," he replied, "I've had pretty good ; lately; but I'm goin' to pull up stake, move to Wisconsin. I think I can do er, further west."

VIII.

LETTING HER SLIDE, AND EFFECTS OF THE SAME.

SEVERAL years since, business called me south, and during my sojourn there I had occasion to pass through the (so called) "Turpentine District" of North Carolina. There were six of us passengers in a stage-coach that was moving along at the rate of about three knots an hour, one hot morning in September, within about an hour's ride of the place where we expected to take dinner, for which we were all pretty "sharp set," as our previous meal hadn't been "much to brag of" as to the quality.

I was suddenly aroused out of the usual stage-coach doze, by hearing a voice hailing the driver, and the stopping of the stage to take up two passengers. The elder, whose name I afterwards learned was Bradford, was a large, square-built man, with a good-

natured, quiet sort of expression. The younger, a man of twenty-five or thirty, was tall, slim, and rather delicate looking, with a jolly, devil-may-care style, and a peculiar short, jerked-out sort of speech, which reminded one of the celebrated Alfred Jingle, Esq., of Pickwickian notoriety. This latter person (who was called by his friend Mac), was the one who had stopped the stage, and whose peculiar *facon de parler* caused us some merriment. The first was addressed to the driver as follows:—

"Hold up, driver—room for two—just in time—in with you! *Let her slide!*"—which latter clause (alluding to the graceful, gliding motion), he affixed to all his remarks, without regard to their bearing on the subject. Both of these individuals were, I thought, slightly elevated.

"I say, Brad, old fellow, hand her out—*let her slide!*"

Who the female alluded to was, I had little time to conjecture, for "Brad" thrust his hand into an inside pocket and drew out a "pocket pistol" of immense size, and clapping the muzzle to his own muzzle, he reduced the load considerably, and passed it to "Mac," who followed suit, and presented the *weapon* to me, with an invitation to

"take a pull—cool you down—hot day—capital stuff, very—*let her slide!*" I declined, however, when he returned the "pocket companion" to his friend, remarking,—

"Dinner at old 'ooman's—lots o' dogs—bacon and indigo—hominy and whiskey. *Let her slide!*"

At the mention of the fluid, the elder drew out the "pocket companion" again, and came to a "present arms," with the muzzle applied to the fissure in his countenance, Mac (who, meanwhile, was becoming very communicative,) remarking,—

"High old gal—six foot eight—two fifty—fourteen barrel! *Let her slide!*"

To which description, the stout man said "Who?"

"Landlady—hotel—dye-house—niggers and homespun—been there before. *Let her slide!*"

Mac received the "pocket companion," which he did justice to, and handed it round, with an assurance that it was "prime stuff—take a snifter—appetite for dinner—*let her slide!*"

In a few moments we drove up to the hotel; Mac, and the large pattern of a small nail (Brad), amusing themselves with the

"pistol," with scarcely enough remaining to *prime* with, though they were pretty well *loaded*.

As we drove up to the door, some score, at least, of miserable-looking, half-starved dogs came yelping out to meet us, snuffing and smelling about our heels as we alighted, as if it would afford them considerable gratification to sample our underpining. Mac here broke out (as he *histed* one of the crowd about a rod),—

"Large assortment—constantly on hand—dozen, or great gross—liberal to dealers—prime sas'ges! *Let her slide!*"

Our landlady was, as Mac described, a large, powerful woman, who kept a dye-house and half-way-house, and some half a dozen niggers. Several pieces of cloth were hanging on the fences about, I noticed, as I with the others passed into the dining-room. I hastily scanned the table to see if any "*sas'ges*" were there, for Mac's hint seemed not an improbable idea. "That pie made o' kittens," may be a delicate and palatable dish, but "sas'ges" out of tough dogs we could not exactly stand!

But no such dish appeared; at the head of the table was a large deep dish, containing about a gallon of "*sop*" or liquid grease, on

the top of which a few dried-up pieces of bacon were floating; next, a large dish of hominy; in the middle, a decidedly bluish-looking loaf of corn-bread was placed, which derived its azure tints from the blue dye used in the establishment, as the darky cook had evidently taken her hands from one of the dye-tubs (of which there were several in the room), to the meal bag, without washing; at the extreme end, was a pair of miserably mean-looking No. 3 mackarel, done to a crisp. We were completely disgusted with this display of a dinner for eight, and we retreated to the piazza, where Bradford and Mac were holding a hurried consultation, in a low tone. They returned to the room, and Brad, addressing the landlady, said—

"Old 'ooman! what's the p-pr-price of dinner?"

"Fifty cents," was the reply.

"That's four d-dollars," said Brad. "Now what'll you t-ta-take for the entire s-s-spread, fixins and all?"

"Seven dollars," was the reply.

Brad immediately handed out a very suspicious-looking ten-dollar on a Mississippi bank, and received an equally dubious one in return, when he and Mac suddenly grasped the four corners of the table-cloth,

and hoisting it clear of the table, Mac sung out—

"Now, then, here she goes—stand from under—one, two, three! "*Let her slide!*"

"Let her slide" they did too, dishes, cloth, blue bread, and all, out of the window! The smash was a signal for a regular stampede of dogs, who were seen swallowing the eatables, and snarling and fighting among themselves, which was pretty music, together with the yar! yars! of the niggers, and our roars at Mac, as the enraged landlady fastened on him, and, before we could prevent it, soused his head several times into a dye-tub close by, filled with a blue liquid!

We all made tracks for the stage, Bradford handing tha driver the remaining three-dollar, telling him to "start the wagon."

Mac had escaped from the grasp of the "old 'oman," and as we drove off, minus our dinners, Mac was wiping his face with his handkerchief, and exclaiming—

"*Dye* is cast"—dyed on the fifteenth instant—sudden and unexpected—blue—deeply and darkly—dyed in the wool—fast colours—warranted to wash—liquid hair dye—deed of darkest dye—'twere well done—'twere done quickly—high old gal—*let her slide!*"

Mac was now getting pathetic (of c
owing to the liquid blue, though he had
drained the "pistol" of the other liquid

"'Twere vain to tell thee—all I f
friends, countrymen, and lovers—him h
offended—no, d—n it, *her*—what's bani
—but set free—feller cit'zens—c
t'gether—'portant 'casion—d' d' da—n
in ind indigo—*let her slide!*" and Mac
over into the arms of Bradford, compl
done up, with too much *liquid.* He fell
a troubled sleep, and occasionally he w
murmur—"high old gal—d— the indi
beautifully blue—deep blue sea—*Let
slide!*"

IX.

THE FIRST PIANO IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS.

A FEW evenings since, after reading to a lady the story about the introduction of a pianoforte into the state of Arkansas—which is conceded on all hands to be a good 'un—feminine friend related to me the incidents connected with the first appearance of the "inanimate quadruped" in the northern portion of the Sucker state—she being "an eye-witness" to what occurred on that occasion. For the amusement of my readers I will venture to describe them.

During the summer following the termination of the Black-Hawk war—being among the first of the "down east" emigrants to the country then barely evacuated by the "red men of the forest"—Dr. A., of Baltimore, removed to what has since become a small town near the Illinois river, by the

name of P——. The doctor's family was composed of three young ladies and his wife, all four of whom were performers on the piano, and one of them the possessor of the instrument in question.

As is usually the case in all newly-settled places when a "new comer" makes his appearance, the "neighbours" (that were to be) had collected together for the purpose of seeing the doctor's "plunder" unpacked, and making the acquaintance of its possessor.

"Dr. A.'s "household" was stowed away in seven large wagons—being first packed in pine boxes, on which were painted in large black letters the contents, address, &c.

One wagon after another was unloaded without much sentation on the part of the little crowd of lookers on, except an occasional exclamation, similar to the following from those who had "never seen the like before":—

"'Glass—This side up with care!' Why, I thought this ere fellar was a doctor! What on yearth is he going to do with that box full of winders!"

"This side up with care!" exclaimed one. "He's got his paragoric and ile-of-spike fixins in that. Won't he fizic them augur follows down on the river?"

In the last wagon there was but *one* large box, and on it were painted the words—"*Piano Forte—Keep dry and handle carefully.*" It required the assistance of all the bystanders to unload this box, and the curiosity excited in the crowd upon reading the foregoing words, and hearing the musical sounds emitted as it touched the ground, can only be gathered by giving a few of the expressions that dropped from the spectators.

"Pine Fort!" said a tall, yellow-haired, fever-and-ague-looking youth—"Wonder if he's afeerd of the Injuns? He can't scare them with a pine fort!!"

"K-e-e-p D-r-y," was spelled by a large raw-boned looking man, who was evidently a liberal patron of "old bald face," who broke off at the letter "y" with "D—— your temperance caratturs; you needn't come round here with tracts!"

He was interrupted at this point by a stout-built personage, who cried out—

"He's got his skelton in thar, and he's afeerd to giv them liker, for they'll break out if he does! Poor fellars! they must suffer powerfully!"

"Handle carefully!" said a man, with a red hunting-shirt, and the size of whose

"fist," as he doubled it up, was twice that of an ordinary man. "There's some live crittur in thar. Don't you hear him groan?" This was said as the box struck the ground, and the concussion caused a vibration of the strings.

No sooner had all hands let go of the box, than Dr. A. was besieged by his neighbours —all of whom were determined to know what were its contents, and what was the meaning of the words, "Piano Forte." On his telling them that it was a musical instrument, some "reckoned that it would take a tarnal sight of wind to blow it!" others, "that it would take a lot of men to make it go!" &c., &c. The Doctor explained its operations as well as he could, but still his description was anything but satisfactory; and he could only get rid of his inquisitive neighbours by promising a sight at an early day.

Three days—days that seemed like weeks to the persons before mentioned—elapsed before the premises of Dr. A. were arranged for the reception of visitors; and various and curious were the surmises among the "settlers" during this time. Dr. A. and his "plunder" were the only topics for conversation for miles around. The Doctor's house

had but one lower room, but this was one of double the ordinary size, and the carpets were all too small to cover the entire floor; hence a strip of bare floor appeared at each side of the room. Opposite to and facing the door was placed the "Pine Fort." All was ready for the admission of "vizters," and Miss E. was to act as the first performer. The Doctor had but to open the door, and half a score of men were ready to enter. Miss E. took her seat, and at the first sounding of the instrument, the whole party present rushed in. Some went directly up to the "crittur," as it had been called on account of its havin four legs—some more shy remained close to the door, where, if necessary, they could more easily make their escape, while others, who had never seen a carpet, were observed walking round on the strip of bare floor, lest by treading on the "handsome kaliker," they might "spile" it!

The first tune seemed to put the whole company in ecstacies. The raw-boned man, who was so much opposed to temperance tracts, pulled out a flask of whiskey, and insisted that the "gal," as he called Miss E., should drink. Another of the company laid down a dime, and wanted, "that's worth" more out of the "*forty pains*," as the name

had come to him after travelling through some five or six pronunciations. Another, with a broad grin on his face, declared that he would give his "claim" and all the "truck" on it, if his "darter" could have such a "cupboard!" The "pine fort" man suggested that if that sort of music had been in the Black Hawk war, "they would have sheered the Inguns like all holler!"

It is needless to say, that it was late at night before Miss E. and the other ladies of the house could satisfy their delighted hearers that they were all tired out. The whole country for twenty miles round rung with the praises of Dr. A.'s "consarns" and their "musical cupboard." The Doctor immediately had any quantity of patients—all of whom, however, would come in person for "advice," or a few "agur pills," but none of whom would leave without hearing the "forty pains."

With an easy way and a good natured disposition, Dr. A. soon formed an extensive acquaintance, obtained a good practice, and became a popular man. He was elevated to some of the most popular offices in the gift of the people—one of which he held at the time of his death. So much for the *charms* of the Piano Forte!

X.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

"A matter fitly adorned with Woods."

WA-AL, began the Yankee, seeing as most the whole of the good company have given a story a-piece, I guess it would be pretty curious for me to hold back, so I'll give you the story of the great Sleigh-hunt at Wiscasset, down East, in the district of Maine. It is now near about ten years that I was keeping school in Wiscasset. I did not take to it much, but not being able to pick up any chores, I thought I might as well do a little at school keeping, seeing as twelve dollars a month and found was better than nothin'. So I began my work, sitting in a school-house ten hours a day, and boarding round from house to house, so as to take out the share of every one that had children to school;—five days for a boy, and three for a

girl. At first I went to Squire Marsh, then to Deacon Sweets, then to the Minister's; to all these places I fared pretty smartly, plenty to eat and that of the best; but, Lord bless ye, when I got to some of the others,—old Brooks, and widow Pettiborne, and George Seabury—gosh! it was another thing. Brooks was a regular skin-flint; and tough bull beef, old rusty pork, potatoes none of the soundest, was the best fare I tasted during his weeks. Thanks to gracious, he had'nt but two children, a boy and a girl to school; and I was glad enough to let him off with seven days instead of eight. Indeed, I never thought I should have stood it so long; but by good luck the squire asked me to dine with him on Sunday, and on Thursday afternoon we had a quilting at the Deacon's, so that gave me two good meals and helped me through; but all this is nothing to the sleigh-ride. It so happened that Deacon Bigelow and Squire Marsh, each on'em got a new sleigh this winter from Boston; so Parson Emerson, not to be behind hand, set Zekiel Jones, the wheelwright, and Josh Whitney the pointer, to work on his old sleigh, and, pity me! if it did not come out nigh about as good as new. This, in course, gave a great start to the folks in Wiscasset

in the way of sleigh-riding, and we all agreed to have a right good time the first smart snow.

Peleg Bigelow, Deacon Bigelow's son, was to take his sister Sally, and Fanny Johnson; they did say that Peleg was making up to Fanny in the way of sparkin', but I guess 'twas only sort o' so and sort o' not so, for Peleg was a curious critter, and didn' do nothing in a hurry. Joe Marsh, the squire's son, was to take the new Boston sleigh; she was a real picture, held twelve seated, and could pack ten more, with his sister Sally, the Whitneys, and a whole lot more; the doctor drove the parson's sleigh, and took Prudence and Experience Emmerson, and all the whole tribe of the Norths'. Doctor Lawrence wanted Sally Marsh to go along, and I sort o' guess the squire and ma'am would'nt have no objections; but Sally wouldn't look at him in the courting line, and no wonder, Doctor was forty if he was a day, and about as good looking as "get out;" any how, Sally wouldn't have nothing to say to him. I 'greed with Joe Whitney for his mare, and widow Pettibone promised to let me have her sleigh providin' I would pay Zekiel Jones for a little fixin' up it wanted. The pesty old critter never once let me see

the sleigh till I had 'greed with her and Zekiel Jones, but when he got it, sure enough it was all to pieces. Zekiel said he had most as lives make a new one, but the old woman had kept me hanging on so long, that every thing that looked like a sleigh was taken up; so I had no chance, 'twas widow Pettibone's sleigh or no frolic. Now, though I was obligated to take Dolly and Jenny Pettibone, (the old mother cornered me into that), yet Sally Marsh partly said that maybe she would give Joe the slip coming home, and take driver's seat with me. This made me the more earnest and willing to take the old woman's sleigh cost what it would.

Well! seeing as every one was provided with sleighs, the next pint was, where should we go? Some were for Pardon Bower's tavern on the Portland road, ten miles out; some for Gosnam's down, on the beach; and some for Lem Davis's over to Colbrook. I rather guess we should finally have agreed on Pardon's, for he had a grand room for a dance, and his flip was about so I tell ye; but when we had most made up our minds to try him, and only stood out because of the price, for Pardon wanted every feller to pay five-and sixpence lawful, and three fourpence ha'pennees for each gal, think o' that!

Well, Pardon, he swore and we argufied; but just about that that time came a man from young George Peabody, who had married Jane Marsh, Sally's sister, and gone to live on the squire's farm at Colebrook, to say that we must all come out there and bring our fiddlers, and he would have everything ready, and it should not cost one of us a cent. Lord! I wish you could have seen Pardon Bowers's face when I tell'd him the news. We had had a long talk in the forenoon, Peleg Bigelow and me, with Pardon, but he he was as stiff as a shingle; so just after dinner I got the news of George Peabody's offer, so Joe Marsh and me, we went right over to Pardon's to tell him about it. The feller saw us comin', and made sure that he had us now as tight as wax.

"Well, boys, said he, "have you come up to my price?"

"Why, ye see, Pardon Bowers," said I, "we must talk it over once more; five-and-sixpence each feller, and three four-pence ha'pennees a gal is a thing we can't stand."

"Well! well! Nathaniel Dorr, there's no use of no more talking; 'you are all talk and no cider.' I'm a thinkin' now jest come to the pint; say yes or no to my price, and I have done; I'm blamed if I care whether the sleigh-ride comes this way or not."

"Well, Pardon, if that's your idee, and you don't really care whether it comes your way or not——"

Not I blame my skin! if I'd give ninepence for the job."

"Well, seeing as it is so, I guess we'll take up with George Peabody's offer. He has invited the whole of the party to stop at the new farm at Colebrook, and I guess we'll have a pretty nice time; we take out our fiddles, and George gets everything else."

Gracious me! how Pardon did cuss and swear. "My eyes to darnation! who ever heard o' the like! Hang that e're Peabody, the mean sneakin ———" Here Pardon stopped pretty short, for he remembered that Joe Marsh, who was standing by, was Peabody's brother-in-law, and he know'd that though Joe was a slow critter, yet once get his dander up he would be savage as a meat axe. So Pardon dar'd not say nothing, but went grumbling into the house. We gave him one hurra! and were off about as tight as we could spring.

Now, all being ready, we only waited for the first snow, but somehow or other that held off. Christmas was close by, and tho' we had had three or four flurries, yet nothing

like a regular north-easter and a fair fall of snow. We began to think there wasn't no more snow to come; but finally on the last Sunday in the year, the clouds gathered thick and hung low, and just about forenoon, meeting time, the large heavy flakes began to fall, and everything promised a heavy snow. All meeting time you could see the young fellers streach their necks most out of their stiffners to peep at the clouds, and when meeting was out, no one pretended to know the text of the sermon, they were so busy talking about the snow and the sleigh-ride. all intermission 'twas exactly the same; 'twas "When shall we go?" and "Who shall drive first?" among the fellers; and "What shall we wear?" and "How shall we look?" among the gals. Well! afternoon meeting came; the ground was covered, the clouds looked heavy and full of snow, though still it did not exactly come down! however, they all said 'twould come on at sunset. So Parson Emmerson gave out,

> "His hoary frost, his fleecy snow,
> Descend and clothe the ground."

Mr. Flag set "Winter," and I guess the singers did roar it out about slick. Well,

we all looked that Parson Emmerson would have given us his snow sermon; the parson he'd preached a very great sermon about snow storms, from Job. xxxviii. 27. the first winter he came to Wiscasset, and seeing as all the people were so well pleased with it, he gave it to them once every winter from that day to this; but I don't know how it was, he did not. Maybe he thought 'twould have made us think too much about the sleigh-ride; anyhow he took another text, and gave a sermon on regeneration or adoption or something of that sort. Well, after meeting, we all hurried out to see how the clouds looked. The first one out was Sam Wheaton, Sam sot near the door, he gave one spring and was out beyond the porch; he looked up at the clouds, and then he ripped right out, "ded rot my skin, if it ain't clearing up!" And so it was; the clouds were scaling off, the snow had stopped, no signs of sleigh-riding.

When the folks all got fairly out, such a talking and wondering and a guessing you never did hear, 'twas not likely but we should have some snow before May-day; so we all went home determined to wait in patience. Three weeks went by, and now 'twas the middle of January, when one

afternoon it began to snow in right earnest—small, dry, fine, and straight down. Before school was out, the ground was covered half-a-foot deep. I hurried to the squire's to speak to Joe about it, when, did ye ever! before I could get to the door, I heard the bell toll; somebody was dead. I guess I did not lose much time before I got to the meeting-house, I found old Joe Wimple tolling away.

"Why, Mr. Nathaniel Dorr, is that you out in the midst of the snow? What is the matter, any body dead?"

"Why, Joe Whipple," said I, as soon as I could get my breath, "if nobody isn't dead, why the nation are you tolling the bell?"

"Oh! surely Mrs. Pettibone is dead; I thought you must know that."

"Mrs. Pettibone? why, I saw her well enough this morning!"

"Oh, ho! Mr. Nat, I don't mean Nancy Pettibone, but the old grandmother that's been bed-rid these ten years; she has got her release at last."

Here was a pretty how-d'ye-do; this darnation old woman had been bed-rid these ten years, and now she must die just so as to break up our fine sleigh-ride. I went

back to the squir's, all the way contriving how soon we could get over it; maybe the funeral would be to-morrow; and then in two or three days we might start; anyhow I should be clear of fat Dolly Pettibone, and now I can have a right smart chance for Sally Marsh out and home. I got to the squire's, Joe was in the sitting-room with Sally and ma'am; just as we began to talk it over, the squire came in; he would not hear a word of the sleigh-ride for at least a fortnight. "Benjamin Pettibone had been an old and respectable inhabitant of the town; a select man, and once member of general court; and it would never do to slight his widow's death in this way; "particularly," said the squire, "as she is poor, and the family rather reduced."

Here, then, was a put off for a fortnight, and we had nothing to do but to have patience a while longer. Well, we did wait, and a tedious time we had of it, never was finer sleighing seen; cold bright days, fine, clear, moonshiny nights, made on purpose for sleighing; then, as bad luck would have it, old Ma'am Pettibone had died just at the full of the moon; so if we waited a fortnight, we might be sure of dark nights and no moon. This was vexatious, but the

squire stood out we must not think of it a day sooner than the end of the second week. Well, ye all know a fortnight can't last for ever, and this here one, though 'twas a plaguy long one, came to an end at last on Friday. Joe Marsh, and Peleg Bigelow, and the doctor and me, had a meeting to the school-house to fix the thing finally. Wa-al, Peleg was for Monday, saying there was no use at all of putting it off, as the snow would then have been on the ground nigh twenty days, but Joe, who, as I said before, was a slow sort of critter, he guess'd he could not get ready by Monday, and he named Wednesday. Now, it so happened that Thursday was the day for the s'lect men to visit school, so I could not anyhow at all be away Wednesday afternoon, nor Thursday. Well, Friday was finally fixed, and Joe was to let his brother, George Peabody, know that Friday evening we would be out, gals, fiddles, and all. I guess you'll think we was pretty glad to get the thing finally settled, so I went that very night to the squire's, to talk with squire about the examination, and maybe to slip in a word to Sally about our going out and home together. Well, squire was not at home, but I found ma'am and Sally in the sitting-room; Sally sewing

something smart for the sleighing, and ma'am knitting. I guess Sally blushed like 'nation when she saw me begin to draw up to her. Well, we had a pretty nice time; ma'am got out some apples and cider, we chatted away fine; I praised the cider and the apples, and the old lady's knitting. Finally, ma'am got into right good humour. "Well, Mr. Nathaniel," she begun, "I suppose you never heard me tell of the curious way of my first seeing squire Marsh?" In course, I said no, and should be glad to know.

Now, I know'd the story most by heart, for the fact is, ma'am Marsh never let any one stay long in Wiscasset without telling 'em this story. Well, I suppose it had been a long while since she got a chance to tell it, for when I said "I'd never heard it" (for truly I never had heard her tell it), she was well nigh tickled to death; so she began to rights, and told the whole thing, how she went to see her uncle at Baintree, in the Bay State, and whereabouts in the town he lived, and how many children he had; then came her visit, how often she had been asked, and how first one thing and then another had hindered her, till finally she got a chance and went. Then came her going to church, and what she wore,—an elegant brocade,

with white scarlet and yellow figures,—then she described the train, and the bonnet. Lord! lord! I thought she never would have done, never in creation. However, finally she got to church, met the squire, loved and married him. But, now all this while I had to listen pretty sharp, for Sally had telled me that ma'am never forgave any one for not listening to her story; so I heard with all my ears, and took care to laugh, and then to say "laws o' me!" and "you don't say so?" and "did I ever?" just in the right place. Ma'am was then carried away with the thought of having such a good listener, and she made the story twice as long and ten times as tedious, so Sally said, as she ever had in her life before. Finally, she came to an end; and then, just as she was all in a pucker with the recollection of her younger days, I ventured to ask "if Sally might not take fat Dolly Pettibone's place in the widow's sleigh?" The old lady peeked up her mouth a little. "She did not use to let Sally go out except with Joe, but seeing as it's you, I don't know but I will, providin' that Sally's agreeable." Sally, like a good girl, was quite willing to go mother's road when she saw which road it was. I would ha' liked

right well to have had nobody else along, but ma'am looked so 'nation sour when I spoke of it, that 'twas finally 'greed that Sally should take her little cousin, Jenny Fairchild, to fill up the odd place. Seeing as I had gone on so smart, I guessed I'd better be going, afore the squire came in to change our plans, so I made ma'am my best bow, gave Sally a roguish look (I think she sort o' smiled back), and I was off.

Well, nothin' happened till Wednesday afternoon, when Joe Marsh came over to the school-house just as school was out in the afternoon, and tell'd me he had got to go over to Colbrook, to carry a whole lot of things to George. "Now, Nat," says Joe, "I want you to go along. Will ye go?"

"Why, Joe, it's no use saying I should be right glad to go over with you; but the fact is, to-morrow is examination day, and I can't no way in the world spare the time. I must see to the school-house, fix the benches, get the chairs for the Select men and parson Emmerson; so I guess I can't go."

"Oh, yes, you must go, Nat," says Joe; "it won't take more than two hours, and mind my word, Nat, you will be sorry if you don't."

Now, as Joe said this, he kind a snickered a little, and gave a curious sort of look out of his eyes, as much as to say, "I knew, if I chose to tell." I tried to get it out of him, but he was "*mum;*" I didn't know what to do, but finally I 'greed to go, and Joe hurried off to get ready. Well, when I came to think it over, says I to myself, "Sure as a gun, Sally is somehow or other at the bottom of it;" so I took time to fix and get out and brush my best coat—blue, with gilt buttons, cost thirteen dollars in Portland, think of that! I got it out, however, and finally rigged, and was off for the squire's. Joe had a whole lot of things to carry; indeed, the sleigh was well nigh loaded down with boxes, and baskets, and demijohns, and jugs, and bottles. I thought for certain that ma'am Marsh had emptied her store-room into it. However, all the things were soon stowed away, and Joe and I were just ready to jump into the sleigh, when, lo and behold! out came Sally, all rigged ready for a ride. She kind o' coloured up when she saw me: "La! Mr. Dorr, I did not know you was going with Joe. Why did you not tell me, Joe?"

"Oh!" says Joe, "room enough, Sally, jump in, jump in."

Ma'am Marsh had gone in, but just at the wrong time out she came with a big jug. "Here, here, Joe, you forgot Jenny's yeast jug; she sent——" The old lady stopped in the midst of her speech when she saw Sally in the sleigh. "Why, Sally, you aint going, surely?"

"Oh yes, ma'am," said Sally, talking it very fast; "it's so long since I have seen Jenny, and I know she will want me to see about the things, and so I thought——"

Here the horses gave a start, I rather guess Joe pricked one of them; he pulled, Sally screamed, I caught the yeast bottle out of the old lady's hands, and whispered "Be off" to Joe. The old lady cried "Stop! stop!" Joe did every thing to stop the horses except pull the reins, and we were off before you could say Jack Robinson.

I heard ma'am screaming after us, "Take care of your sister, Joe." On we went, as fast as we could clip it, Sally sitting in one corner, and I edging up to her every jolt the sleigh gave till I was close alongside. Joe had as much as he could do to manage the horses, he had out the young ones; so Sally and I were all the same as quite alone. In less than no time we got to the bridge at Colbrook, Joe checked his horses to a walk

over, according to the rules of the bridge. Well, we had got most over, when pop! right under my feet, I thought 'twas a pistol. Sally screamed, Joe swore right out, "Blame the yeast jug, it has burst." The crack of the bottle, Sally's scream, and Joe's cursing, just drove the horses right mad; away they flew; one spring, we were past the toll-house; another, they rounded the corner towards the pond, over went the sleigh, and afore I knew anything, souse we were all of us in the pond. By good luck it was not deep, or we might never have got out, for the whole sleigh load went together. Sally and Joe, and me and the boxes, and jars and bottle, and demijohn, helter-skelter. Jim Davis, who saw the whole, then ran down, and by his help we scrambled out, dragged out the sleigh, though the pole was broken and one of the sides, and saved some of the things. Then we put Sally, who was most frozen to death, poor soul! into Jim's sled, that luckily stood by, mounted ourselves, and soon got to George's.

Jenny Peabody took charge of Sally, and George had Joe and me into his bed-room, where he offered each of us a suit of dry clothes. Joe did pretty well, for though he was so thin that George's things hung all in

bags round him, yet being of the same height it did not look so bad; as for me, I tried it every way and how, but it would not do. George was a little short critter, and his trowsers did not come down to my knee; and even then the top of the trowsers and the bottom of the jacket were wide apart. So, after hugging and coaxing, 'twas no use. "Come! come! Nat!" said George; "my rigging never will go on to your spars, so just turn into bed and we will dry your own things." There was no use objecting, so I, like my lord mayor, went to bed while my breeches were—not mending, to be sure, but—drying. Towards night George came up with my things, I dressed and came down to the sitting-room; Sally was not down, and her sister said 'twas not to be thought of her returning to Wiscasset that night. George was very friendly in asking me to stay, but I told him next day was examination, and I had been away too long already. Here, however, was another put-off to our sleigh-ride; George Peabody had lost half his things, and Sally was sick,—no hope of sleighing for Friday. I began to think the very deuce was in it, and that we never should have our frolic; however, George, who was a real free-hearted fellow, said we

must come next week, by that time Sally would be well, and Jenny all ready. I hung back a little at first, but finally we agreed for next Friday providing that Sally was well. This being fixed, Joe and I started, and soon got back to Squire Marsh; ma'am was frightened almost out of her wits at our being out so late and Sally's not coming with us. We soon told the whole story, and then I went off home; the squire sent Dan, his hired man, after Doctor Lawrence, as he did not think much of Jarvis, the Colbrook doctor. Next day, bright and early, I went over to the squire's to hear the news. Early as it was, the doctor had been over, and I found him with the squire telling the symptoms. He talked very learned about the nerves and the vital energies, and a deal more that was too deep for me, and for the squire too, I fancy; however, it all went for gospel with the squire, who had a great idea of Doctor Lawrence. I was obliged to hasten to school, and attend examination; this took up all day, and in the evening I was too tired to go anywhere, so heard nothing of Sally.

Next day I had a talk with Joe about her. He said that the doctor still talked very wise about her, that he would not let her leave her bed, though she told him she was quite well,

Thursday came, and still Sally was in bed; the sleigh-ride was put off once more, and no day fixed, for the doctor would not, or could not, tell when Sally would be well enough to go. Now, all this seemed pretty curious to me; I could not think what the old critter meant by keeping Sally up and hindering the frolic. Well, Saturday afternoon I was into Peleg Bigelow's store, with a whole lot o' fellers, talking and laughing, and now and then taking a glass of something good, when finally they all got talking about the sleigh-ride, and how often it had been put off; then Hezekiah Bigelow, Peleg's brother, spoke up; he was just down from Portland. "Now," says he, "fellers! can any o' ye tell when Sally Marsh will be well, so that ye can have this grand sleigh-ride you talk so much about?"

In course we all said, "No! Dr. Lawrence says her nerves are all out of joint, and it's uncertain as life when she will be out again."

"Dr. Lawrence and her nerves go to darnation," said Zekiah, "I know a thing or two; Sally Marsh will be quite well,—nerves, joints, and all,—as soon as the doctor gets word from Portland that the new sleigh he has ordered from Lawrence and Gammage is done. Now Bill Gammage told me yesterday

that the sleigh would not be ready for a week at soonest, so you need not look to see Sally's nerves in joint for a good spell yet."

The news struck us all in a heap. Who would have thought that the plaguy old pill-driver would keep Sally in her room, drinking elder-flower tea and eating milk porridge till Lawrence and Gamage had got his sleigh done?

"But what is to be done?" said Peleg Bigelow; "it will never do to say that an old feller like Lawrence kept the whole town out of a frolic only just because he hadn't got a new sleigh."

"Let's send him word the sleigh is ready," said Hezekiah; Nat Dorr can write a note from Gammage, and I'll give it to the doctor, saying that the sleigh will be down to morrow or next day, and you'll see if Sally's nerves aint well to-rights."

I went at it, and soon finished a note to Doctor Lawrence, promising him, in the name of Lawrence and Gammage, that the sleigh would be to home on Tuesday. Zekiah took it up, and we all staid in the store waiting to see what would come of it. Zekiah was not gone long, and when he came back he was well nigh dead with laughing. "Well, Zeek, what's the news; have you caught him?"

"Caught him?" says Zeek, "yes, that I have; caught him on the first bounce. No sooner had he read the note, than he hollowed right out for Sam to saddle the old grey, as he must go over to Colbrook, and mind my words, he will let Sally get well now."

"Like enough," said I; "so any way I will go to the squire's to-night, though 'tis Saturday night, and hear the news."

When I got there, I found, sure enough, the doctor had been out to Colbrook, and just back, and giving his opinion. 'Twas now quite another thing; no nerves nor vital energies, nor nothing of the sort, all plain and straightforward; Sally was better, was almost well, would be quite smart by the middle of the week. "And so," says the doctor, "George has made Thursday for the sleigh-ride, and hopes we will all come out. Sally says she will come home Monday."

Well, seeing this, I could not help giving the old feller a hint. "Pray, doctor," says I, "don't you think we might have the sleigh-ride on Tuesday, I guess all will be ready by that time?" The doctor looked plaguy hard at me, but I kept a stiff upper lip, and I never let on by word, or look that meant any harm; he was sort o' puzzled, not knowing how to take me; finally, the squire helped him out.

"Oh, no, Mr. Dorr, Thursday is soon enough."

"Oh! very well, squire, I only just asked, thinking maybe all might be ready by Tuesday." Here I gave another sharp squint at the doctor; he looked blank, but said nothing. Ma'am began to talk about it's being Saturday night, and holy time; so I took my hat and marched off, leaving the doctor to get out of his puzzle as well as he could.

Well, this time we made sure of our frolic. The weather was fine, Sally came home Monday, looking as fresh as a rose. Every body was in high spirits, excepting the doctor; but when Tuesday night came, and no sleigh from cousin 'Siah (Lawrence and Gammage was his cousin), the old feller looked pretty streaked. Wednesday morning I was going to school, when Zekiah Bigelow came up. "How d'ye do, Nat?" says he.

"Pretty smart, how's yourself?"

"Why, middling, thank ye. I was going to Portland to-day, though Peleg tried to persuade me to stay; but I have just been over to Parson Emmerson's, and, sure enough, they are all in a pucker. The doctor has sent word that he can't drive their sleigh, and they were most 'fraid to trust Sam, besides not liking so many gals to go with

no beau but their father's hired man; so I reckoned I might as well offer, and sure enough they snapped me up about the quickest, I tell ye. Now, if the doctor don't get his new sleigh, says Zeek, and he gave a sort of snicker, "he will be in a pretty pickle. But here he is, sure enough, with a letter; I'll bet a dollar 'tis to Lawrence and Gammage about the new sleigh—however, it's too late now. Good morning, doctor; how is it you don't drive the parson's sleigh?"

"Why, Mr. Zekiah, I am a good deal occupied just at present with professional business, and it is rather uncertain whether I can go or not; so I did not risk disappointing them."

"Well, doctor, so much the better for lazy folks like me; I am going to drive the Harrisons and the Emmersons myself."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "I thought you were going to Portland?"

"Oh, I was, but I guess I may as well stay to the frolic."

With that the doctor turned off towards the post-office; I went into the school-house, and Zekiah homewards.

I think I never did know a day quite so long as this Wednesday, seemed to me as if

it would never be done; however, night came pretty soon after sun-down, and then I put on my blue, Jekiel Parsons, the tailor, had fixed it up, so that 'twas little or none the worse for the ducking in Colbrook pond, and went to the squire's to tea. Sally was to home, looking as bright as a button; and when I asked her not to forget her promise to take a seat in my sleigh, and she smiled so killing, Lord bless ye! I felt so all overish.

The squire gave a queer look, and said, "Don't promise too soon; wait, Sally, always wait, and see how many offers you are going to get."

Ah, ah! thinks I, you are there, are you? The squire 's pretty fierce in favour of the doctor, but we've got round him this time any how. "Think of the old boy," is an old saying, and now it proved true, for just at the very minute in came the doctor. The squire went right up to him, good as could be; but the doctor looked black as a thunder cloud. I had telled Joe Zekiel's prank, and now we thought to poke some fun at the old critter. "How is it, doctor," says Joe, "you don't join the sleigh-ride to-morrow night, I thought you were too great a beau to refuse?" The doctor said nothing, only mumbled out something about professional avocation, but

Joe kept at him, telling how many were going, and what a fine time we should have, and all the while winding up with "Wonder you don't go, doctor; Sally expected it, didn't ye, Sally?" The squire saw that something was wrong, so he called off Joe, and sent him into the office to copy a law paper, and then challenged the doctor to play backgammon; Sally at the same time took a demure turn and began to knit; so, seeing that nothing more in the way of fun was to be made out of them, I bade good night and went off home.

I believe I laid awake half the night, thinking of the sleigh-ride and Sally Marsh; finally, I got to sleep, and never waked till broad day. I looked to the window; darnation! what is this? I sprang up, looked out, 'twas a hard rain, wind southard and eastard, and the snow most all gone. All up with our frolic; and—would you b'lieve it!—that was the last snow that year, and we never had our sleigh-ride from that day to this!

XI.

A SHORT RECEIPT FOR A POTATO PUDDING.

THE author of the "Widow Bedott" papers furnishes an article for Saturday's "Gazette," from which we extract the following mirth provoking recipe for a pototo pudding. Mrs. Mudlaw, we premise, is the cook of Mrs. Philpot, wife of the candidate for congress, and Mrs. Darling is the wife of a worthy mechanic, whose vote Colonel Philpot is ambitious to obtain. Mrs. Darling calls upon Mrs. Philpot, and the latter introduces her to Mrs. Mudlow, her cook, when the following conversation takes place.

"Miss Philpot says you want to get my receipt for potato pudden."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Darling, "I would be obliged to you for the directions," and she took out of her pocket a pencil and paper to write it down.

"Well, 'tis an excellent pudden," said Mudlaw, complacently; "for my part, I like it about as well as any pudden I make, and that's saying a good deal I can tell you, for I understand making a great variety. 'Taint so awful rich as some, to be sure. Now there's the Cardinelle pudden, and the Washington pudden, and the Lay Fayette pudden, and the—"

"Yes, Mr. Darling liked it very much—how do you make it?"

"Wal, I peel my potaters and bile 'em in fair water. I always let the water bile before I put 'em in. Some folks let their potaters lie and sog in the water ever so long before it biles; but I think it spiles 'em. I always make it a pint to have the water bile—"

"How many potatos?"

"Wal, I always take about as many potaters as I think I shall want. I'm generally governed by the size of the pudden I want to make. If it's a large pudden, why I take quite a number, but if it's a small one, why then I don't take as many. As quick as they're done, I take 'em up and mash 'em as fine as I can get 'em. I'm always very particular about *that*—some folks aint, they'll let their potaters be full o'

lumps. I never do. If there's anything I hate, it's lumps in potaters. I *won't* have 'em. Whether I'm mashin potaters for puddens or vegetable use, I mash it till there aint the size of a lump in it. If I can't git it fine without sifting, why, I *sift* it. Once in a while, when I'm otherways engaged, I set the girl to mashin on't. Wal, she'll give it three or four jams, and come along—'Miss Mudlaw, is the potater fine enough?' Jupiter Rammin! that's the time I come as near getting mad as I ever allow myself to come, for I make it a pint never to have lumps—"

"Yes, I know it is very important. What next?"

"Wal, then I put in my butter; in winter time I melt it a little, not enough to make it ily, but jest so's to soften it."

"How much butter does it require?"

"Wal, I always take butter accordin to the size of the pudden; a large pudden needs a good-size lump o' butter, but not too much. And I'm always particular to have my butter fresh and sweet. Some folks think it's no matter what sort of butter they use for cookin, but *I* don't. Of all things I do despise strong, frowy, rancid butter. For pity's sake have your butter fresh."

"How much butter did you say?"

"Wal, that depends, as I said before, on what size puddin you want to make. And another thing that regulates the quantity of butter I use, is the 'mount o' cream I take. I always put in more or less cream; when I have abundance o' cream I put in considerable, and when it's scarce, why I use more butter than I otherwise should. But you must be particular not to get in too much cream. There's a great deal in havin jest the right quantity; and so 'tis with all the ingrejiences. There ain't a better pudden in the world than a potater pudden when it's made *right*, but taint everybody that makes 'em right. I remember when I lived in Tucker town, I was a visitin to squire Humphrey's one time, I went in the first company in Tuckertown—dear me! this is a changeable world. Wal, they had what they call a potater pudden for dinner. Good land! Of all the puddens! I've often occurred to that pudden since, and wondered what the squire's wife was a thinkin of when she made it. I wa'nt obleged to do such things in them days, and didn't know how to do anything as well as I do now. Necessity's the mother of invention. Experience is the best teacher after all—"

"Do you sweeten it?"

"O yes, to be sure, it needs sugar, best o' sugar, too; not this wet, soggy, brown sugar. Some folks never think o' usin good sugar to cook with, but, for my part, I won't have no other—"

"How much sugar do you take?"

"Wal, that depends altogether on whether you calculate to have saas for it—some like saas, you know, and then some agin don't. So, when I calculate for saas, I don't take so much sugar; and when I don't calculate for saas, I make it sweet enough to eat without saas. Poor Mr. Mudlaw was a great hand for pudden saas. I always made it for him—good, rich saas, too. I could afford to have things rich before he was unfortunate in business." (Mudlaw went to state's prison for horse stealing.) "I like saas myself, too, and the curnel and the children are all great saas hands; and so I generally callate for saas, though Miss Philpot prefers the pudden without saas, and perhaps *you'd* prefer it without. If so, you must put in sugar accordinly. I always make it a pint to have 'em sweet enough when they're to be eat without saas."

"And don't you use eggs?"

"Certainly, eggs is one o' the principal ingrejiences."

"How many does it require?"

"Wal, when eggs is plenty, I always use plenty; and when they're scarce, why I can do with less, though I'd ruther have enough; and be sure to beat them well. It does distress me the way some folks beat eggs. I always want to have 'em thoroughly beat for everything I use 'em in. It tries my patience most awfully to have anybody round me that won't beat eggs enough. A spell ago we had a darkey to help in the kitchen. One day I was makin sponge cake, and, havin occasion to go up stairs after something, I sot her to beaten the eggs. Wal, what do you think the critter done? Why, she whisked 'em round a few times, and turned 'em right into the other ingrejiences that I'd got weighed out. When I come back and saw what she'd done, my gracious! I came as nigh to losin my temper as I ever allow myself to come. 'Twas awful provokin! I always want the kitchen help to do things as I want to have 'em done. But I never saw a darkey yet that ever done anythin right. They're a lazy slaughtering set. To think o' her spilin that cake so, when I'd told her over and over agin that I always made it a pint to have my eggs thoroughly beat!"

"Yes, it was too bad. Do you use fruit in the pudding?"

"Wal, that's just as you please. You'd better be governed by your own judgment as to that. Some like currents and some like raisins, and than agin some don't like nary one. If you use raisins, for pity's sake pick out the stuns. It's awful to have a body's teeth come grindin onto a raisin stun. I'd rather have my ears boxed at any time."

"How many raisins must I take?"

"Wal, not too many—it's apt to make the pudden heavy, you know; and when it's heavy it ain't so light and good. I'm a great hand—"

"Yes. What do you use for flavouring?"

"There agin you'll have to exercise your own judgment. Some like one thing, and some another, you know. If you go the hull figger on temperance, why some other kind o' flavourin 'll do as well as wine or brandy, I 'spose. But, whatever you make up your mind to use, be particular to git in a sufficiency, or else your pudden 'll be flat. I always make it a pint—"

"How long must it bake?"

"There's the great thing, after all. The bakin's the main pint. A potater pudden, of all puddens, has got to be baked jest right. For if it bakes a leetle too much, it's apt to dry it up—and then agin if it don't bake quite

enough, it's sure to taste potatery, and that spiles it, you know."

"How long should you think?"

"Wal, that depends a good deal on the heat of your oven. If you have a very hot oven, 'twon't do to leave it in too long, and if your oven ain't so very hot, why you'll be necessiated to leave it in longer."

"Well, how can I tell anything about it?"

"Why, I always let 'em bake till I think they're done, that's the safest way. I make it a pint to have 'em baked exactly right. It's very important in all kinds o' bakin—cake, pies, bread, puddens, and everything—to have 'em baked precisely long enough, and jest right. Some folks don't seem to have no system at all about their bakin. One time they'll burn their bread to a crisp, and then again it'll be so slack taint fit to eat. Nothin hurts my feelins so much as to see things over-done or slack-baked. Here only t'other day, Lorry, the girl that Miss Philpot dismissed yesterday, came within an ace o' lettin my bread burn up. My back was turned a minit, and what should she do but go to stuffiin wood into the stove at the awfullest rate. If I hadn't found it out jest when I did, my bread would a been sp'ilt as sure as I'm a live woman. Jupiter Rammin!

I was about as much decomposed as I ever allow myself to get! I told Miss Philpot I wouldn't stand it no longer—either Lorry or me must walk."

"So you've no rule about making this pudding?"

"No rule!" said Mudlaw, with a look of intense surprise.

"Yes," said Mrs. Darling, "you seem to have no rule for anything about it."

"No rule!" screamed the indignat cook, starting up, while her red face grew ten times redder and her little black eyes snapped with rage. "No rules!" and she planted herself in front of Mrs. Darling, erecting her fleshy figure to its full height of majestic dumpiness, and extending the forefinger of her right hand till it reached an alarming propinquity to the lady's nose. "No rules! do you tell me I've no rules! Me! that's cooked in the first families for fifteen years, and always gin satisfaction, to be told by such as you that I haint no rules!"

Thus far had Mudlaw proceeded, and I know not what length she would have "allowed herself" to go, had not the sudden entrance of Col. Philpot interrupted her. He being a person of whom she stood somewhat in awe, particularly just at this time,

she broke off in the midst of her tirade, and, casting a look of ineffable disgust at Mrs. Darling, retreated to her own dominions to vent her fury upon poor Peggy, who had done everything wrong during her absence.

XII.

THE BERKSHIRE PIG;

AN ELECTIONEERING RUSE.

"THE fact is, gentlemen," said one of a party, who were enjoying themselves in a private room over a glass of wine, and talking politics, "there are mighty few who know how the state of Louisiana was carried by the whigs during the last presidential campaign."

"How was it?" asked the party.

"Well, I'll tell you," said the speaker, who had a sly twinkling of humour in his eye. "During the campaign of '48, when the prominent advocates of democracy and whiggery were canvassing the state, one of the distinguished men of each party met by appointment at a small village, where the people were nearly equally divided in politics. The democrat spoke after the whig, and it was the general opinion that the democrat had carried the day.

"After he had concluded his speech the people were about to disperse, when a tall, raw-boned, ugly-looking customer got up on the stand and said—

"'Gentlemen, afore you disperse I want to say a word or two in reply to that last gentleman that talked."

"At first the crowd commenced hissing and hooting, to put him down, but he wasn't one of the kind to stay put.

"'Fellow citizens,' shouted the stranger, in a stentorian voice, "I will introduce myself to you as a Kentuckian. (Shouts of Hurrah for Kentucky.) They say Rome was once saved by the cacklin' of geese, but I don't think the hissin' of any of you here will save Lousiany, or elect old Zack!"

"This speech was received with rounds of applause and shouts of laughter. He had won the crowd over on his side. They perceived at once that he was a character, and they became very anxious to hear him.

"'Fellow citizens,' continued the Kentuckian, "I want a chance, if you will give it to me, to put the gentleman, that last talked to you about Gen. Cass, through a course of sprouts.' (Laughter, and cries of Go on.)

"Here the stranger put both hands in his

coat pockets and drew out of one the Cleveland Plaindealer, and out of the other the Nashville Union, and, with a sort of seriocomico expression of countenance, said—

"'Fellow citizens, you mustn't be down on me because my talk is like sawed plank in the rough. It is too late now for me to commence plainin' my language, though I once had a pretty smart sprinklin' of larnin', but I have always thought when I was young I collapsed a flue, and a right smart chance of it leaked out.'

"He then read from the Plaindealer the most strenuous assurances to the democracy of the north that Gen. Cass was a Wilmot proviso man, and from the Union assurances just as positive that Gen. Cass was a proslavery man.

"'Now, I am not good at speaking,' continued the Kentuckian, "but the Michigan man's position puts me in mind of a little circumstance which happened in my neighbourhood in Kentucky some time ago, which I must tell you. You all remember what a perfect mania prevailed some years ago on the subject of Durham calves, Berkshire pigs, South Down sheep, &c. Well, I had a neighbour by the name of Martin, who was an uncommon clever physician, and an im-

porter of fine stock. One day the doctor stopped to get his horse shod at neighbour Bird's, the blacksmith, who lived about two miles from the doctor's house. The doctor commenced talking about his beautiful Berkshire pigs, and told the blacksmith, in a fit of liberality, that he would give him a pig out of the next litter that 'Su' had.'

"'In the course of two months or such a matter, the doctor called at the shop and told neighbour Bird that 'Su' had had a fine litter, and to send and get his pig. So Bird posts his man Bob off with his wife's large willow basket to get the pig. Between Bird's and Martin's, Sam Smith, who was a great quiz, kept a little grocery, and seeing Bob coming post haste on his master's horse old Tom, with the basket on his arm, he sang out, 'Halloo, Bob, where are you going in such a hurry this morning?' 'I is gwine to Massa Doctor Martin's to get Massa Tom's Buckshur pig, what Massa Doctor promise Massa Tom de las' time he shod he hos,' said the negro, as he reined in his animal. 'Well, Bob, you must stop as you come back and let me see the pig.' 'Dat I will, Massa Sam; dat I will;' and away he went, at the top of old Tom's speed. In less than an hour Bob returned with a genuine swine, and alighting

at the grocery he lifted the cover of the basket, and to the astonished gaze of the grocery man, who imagined a Berkshire pig to be something more than a mere hog, exhibited a very beautiful specimen of a jet black pig. An idea struck Sam Smith to play a joke on Bob, and knowing his propensity to imbibe, told him to go int othe grocery and get a dram. While Bob was gone Sam Smith ran round the back of the house and got a little black pup nigh about the same heft, and took the pig out of the basket and put the pup in. When Bob came out and mounted his nag, Sam Smith handed him the basket, and off he went. On arriving at home the blacksmith asked him if he had got the pig. 'Yes, massa, and a werry fine pig he be too,' said Bob, lifting up the cover; 'black as a coal;' when, to the utter astonishment of Bob and Bird, there lay a little black curly puppy. 'Is that a Berkshire pig?' asked the blacksmith, in amazement; 'why it is a pup, not a pig!' 'Bless de Lord,' said Bob, 'he be pig when I put him in de basket, but he change to pup!' 'Take him back, sir,' said Bird, highly indignant, 'and tell Dr. Martin that I don't want to be fooled with his puppies, and if he don't want to give me a Berkshire pig, to say so.'

"Bob started back, and naturally enough stopped at the grocery to relate his mishap to Sam Smith, who heard him out with a countenance expressive of wonder, at the same time doing his best to control his increasing desire to burst into fits. 'Well, get down, Bob,' said the grocer, 'and take another dram.' Bob didn't require a second invite, and while he was getting his 'bald face,' the grocer took the pup from the basket, and put back the pig. 'Massa Sam,' said Bob, coming out to mount his horse, 'I am mighty obfusticated 'bout dis pig. Fust I tink him pig, I know he is pig fust, but den I know he is pup too. Arn't you sartain, Massa Sam, he was pig fust?' asked Bob, as he mounted his crittur. 'I'll swear to it,' replied Smith, and away Bob rode for the doctor's.

On arriving at the house, Bob delivered his message, but the doctor seeming somewhat incredulous as to the truth of the story, Bob, with a flourish of insulted veracity, opened the lid of the basket, when, lo! there was the identical pig that he had started with. Bob stood transfixed, and with eyes protruding, and mouth open, remarked, ''for God, 'taint no use, Massa, he be pup or pig, jus' as he pleases.' The crowd became con-

ulsed with laughter, and gave the Kenuckian three cheers. The fellow was hired ɔ tell the same story in the democratic arishes, which he did with such powerful ffect that the Whigs carried the State."

XIII.

BINGO.

A FEW years ago I attended the superior court for the county of ———. The court adjourned late in the night, and the judge and bar being very weary, retired to their beds immediately thereafter. We were all in the same room, and immediately adjoining to us was the bar-room, and the chinks or vacant spaces in the partition enabled us to see and hear all that was going on. Shortly after we had retired, about forty men "pretty well corned, and up to everything," entered the liquor room. No sooner had they arrived than they commenced boasting. "I'm the step-father of the earth!" said one. "I'm the yallow blossom of the forest!" exclaimed another, and requested his fellow-citizens then and there being "to nip the bud if they dare." "I'm kin to a rattle-

snake on the mother's side!" shouted the earth's ancestor. This seemed to be a "*socdoliger*," (which translated into Latin, means a *ne plus ultra*); for the "yallow blossom" stopped to consider what answer he could possibly make to this high claim of ancestry. A happy thought struck him. "Will you drink or fight?" roared he in a voice of thunder.

A silence ensued, or at least a subdued murmur, "'twixt which and silence there was nothing." Perhaps a more embarrassing question could not have been propounded. The rattlesnake's son was exceedingly thirsty—the sands of Africa were not more so; and liquor was the idol of his heart. He loved it dearly, but he loved fighting also; and here was a glorious chance to "lick" an adversary he had longed to get at. *Curia vult advisare.* He was deliberating between these equally pleasant alternatives, when it occurred to him that it was possible to accomplish both.

"*Both!*" responded he, "both. I'll drink first—I'll fight afterwards."

A loud shout of approbation rose from the crowd. The liquor was called for—a pint of buck-eye whiskey—and impartially divided into two tumblers. The adversaries

each took one, and grasping each other with their left hands, and touching the glasses together in token of amity, drained their respective glasses to the last drop, and then smashed them over the heads of each other, and at it they went. A clamour ensued, so terrific that the English language has no word that would be sufficiently expressive of it. All sorts of encouragement were offered by the friends of each combatant, and an amateur, who had no particular predilection for either, jumped upon the counter, and commenced singing a poetic description of all the naval battles of America from the time of Columbus to the present day (which somebody has had the barbarity to put into miserable verse), keeping time with his heels on the counter. Just as he got to the one hundred and ninety-ninth verse, and was in the midst of what he called "The Wasp and Hornet engagement," his melody was stopped by a shrill cry from the "yallow blossom of the forest," who began to fall into the sere and yellow leaf, and gave manifest symptoms of being whipped.

"He bites!" screamed he.

"I get my livelihood by biting," said the other, relaxing his hold for a moment, and then taking a fresh start.

"'Nuff! 'nuff! take him off!"

Up rose the rattlesnake amidst loud cheering. His first impulse was to crow like a cock; then he changed his genus very suddenly, and declared that he was a "sea-horse of the mountain," and that he had sprung from the Potomac of the earth; then he was a bear with a sore head; a lion with a mangy tail; a flying whale; in short, he announced himself to be every possible and every impossible bird, beast, and fish, that the land or the sea has ever produced.

His wit having exhausted itself, some fresh excitement or novelty was requisite. "Let's have "*Bingo!* suggested a by-stander. "Huzza for Bingo," echoed the crowd. Well, thought I, I don't know who and what Bingo is, but I do know, that when things reach their worst condition, any change must be for the better; and as any change from this terrible riot must be for the better, I say too, "Huzza for Bingo!" Alas!—as the sequel proved, I deceived myself greatly.

A gallon of whiskey with spice in it, and a gallon of Malaga wine, were placed on a large round table, around which about forty men seated themselves, having first elected a president *vivâ voce.* The president elect commenced the game by singing at the top of his voice:—

"A farmer's dog sat on the barn-door,
And Bingo was his name, O!"

And they all shouted in chorus—

"And Bingo was his name, O!"

"B," said the president, "i" said the next, "n" the third, "g" the fourth, "o" the fifth; and then the chorus, taking up the letter "o," again shouted—

"And Bingo was his name, O!"

If either missed a letter, or said "n" for example when he should have said "i," his penalty was to take a drink, and the company, as a privilege, drank with him; and with such slight interruptions as the time for drinking would occupy, this continued for about six hours.

At last the patience of the judge (who was quite a young man, and who is not more than a squirrel's jump from me while I write) became exhausted, and he called for the landlord. Our host, who was a tailor by trade, and who was also one of the Bingo fraternity, made his appearance with a candle in his hand, and a very affectionate and drunken leer upon his countenance.

"Go, sir," said the judge, "into the next

room, and tell those drunken lunatics that if they don't stop their beastly noise, I'll commit every one of them to jail in the morning, for contempt of court."

"Oh, judge!" answered our host, holding up his unoccupied hand in token of his amazement; "Oh, judge, you'll give me the *double-breasted horrors!* Why, judge, work is *scarce*, and people's pertikler; and if I was to preliminary your orders to that crowd of gentlemen, why, judge, I'd pick up a thrashing in a little less than no time;" and off he staggered. Bingo was forthwith resumed, until gradually the chorus became more confused and indistinct. Chaos had come again. The actions of the virtuous gentlemen there assembled ceased to be above board, and were carried on under the table. Some were snoring, others hiccuping. Bingo had ceased to be, except when some sleeper, feeling some painful sensation from his attitude, etc., would exclaim "Oh!" which would wake up his immediate neighbour, who, the ruling passion strong in death, would exclaim—"And Bingo was——," and then relapse into such silence as a drunken man generally falls into.

Years have passed away since that awful night. Joys have blessed me; afflictions

pained me; but all the vicissitudes of life have failed to drive out of my memory that terrible game and tune of Bingo. It haunts me like a dun in the day, like a ghost in the night. If I hear any one say "Oh!" the sequel immediately occurs to me—"And Bingo was his name, O!" I am not much of an anatomist, but I am satisfied that when a post-mortem examination is had upon me, the whole matter of Bingo will be found incorporated with my pia-mater, or dura-mater, or some other portion of my brain. I can't tell the process or the manner by which, and in which, it has become a part and parcel thereof; but this much I know, that if my operator is a skilful surgeon, he will find there developed, in characters that *he* can read, the distinct statement that there was a farmer, who had a dog, whose peculiar habit and custom it was to sit upon the barn door, and that he answered to the classical and melodious name of "Bingo."

In a very heavy equity cause which was tried some years ago in our circuit, one of the jurors who had been inundated with cases from "Vesey Junior," expressed a wish "that Vesey Junior had died *before* he (Vesey Jr.) had been born." I have something of the same feeling towards "Bingo." Have not you also, reader?

XIV.

BOB HERRING.

It is not expected that a faithful description of the Devil's Summer Retreat, in Arkansas, will turn the current of fashion of two worlds, from Brighton and Bath, or from Ballston or Saratoga, although the residents in the neighbourhood of that delightful place profess to have ocular demonstration, as well as popular opinion, that his satanic majesty, in warm weather, regularly retires to the "retreat," and "there reclines in the cool." The solemn grandeur that surrounds this distinguished resort is worthy of the hero, as represented by Milton; its characteristics are, darkness, gloom, and mystery; it is composed of the unrivalled vegetation and forest of the Mississippi Valley. View it when you will, whether decked out in all the luxuriance of a southern summer, or

stripped of its foliage by the winter's blasts; it matters not, its grandeur is always sombre. The huge trees seem immortal, their roots look as if they struck to the centre of the earth, while the gnarled limbs reach out to the clouds. Here and there may be seen one of these lordly specimens of vegetation furrowed by the lightning; from its top to the base you can trace the subtle fluid in its descent, and see where it shattered off the limb, larger than your body, or turned aside from some slight inequality in the bark. These stricken trees, no longer able to repel the numerous parasites that surround them, soon become festooned with wreaths and flowers, while the damp airs engender on living tree and dead, like funeral drapery, the pendent moss, that waves in every breeze, and seems to cover the whole scene with the gloom of the grave. Rising out of this forest for ten square miles, is the dense cane-brake that bears the name of the "Devil's Summer Retreat;" it is formed by a space of ground, on which, seemingly from its superiority of soil, more delicate vegetation than surrounds it has usurped its empire. Here the reed, that the disciple of Izaac Walton plays over the northern streams like a wand, grows into a delicate mast, springing from the rich allu-

vium that gives it sustenance with the prodigality of grass, and tapering from its roots to the height of twenty or thirty feet, there mingling, in compact and luxuriant confusion, its long leaves. A portion of this brake is interwoven with vines of all descriptions, which makes it so thick that it seems to be impenetrable as a mountain. Here, in this solitude, where the noon-day sun never penetrates, ten thousand birds, with the instinct of safety, roost at night, and at the dawn of day, for a while, darken the air as they seek their haunts, their manure deadening, for acres around, the vegetation, like a fire, so long have they possessed the solitude. Around this mass of cane and vine, the black bears retire for winter quarters, where they pass the season, if not disturbed, in the insensibility of sleep, and yet come out in the spring as fat as when they commenced their long nap. The forest, the waste, and the dangers of the cane-brake, add to the excitement of the Arkansas hunter; he conquers them all, and makes them subservient to his pursuits. Associated with these scenes, they to him possess no sentiment; he builds his log-cabin in a clearing made by his own hands, amid the surrounding grandeur, and it looks like a gipsy-hut among the ruins of

a Gothic cathedral. The noblest trees are only valuable for fence-rails, and the cane-brake is "an infernal dark hole," where you can "see sights," "catch bears," and "get a fish-pole, ranging in size from a penny whistle to that of a young stove-pipe."

The undoubted hero of the Devil's Summer Retreat is old Bob Herring; he has a character that would puzzle three hundred metaphysicians consecutively. He is as bold as a lion, and as superstitious as an Indian. The exact place of his birth he cannot tell, as he says his parents "travelled" as long as he can remember them. He "squatted" on the Mississippi, at its nearest point to the Retreat, and there erecting a rude cabin commenced hunting for a living, having no prospect ahead but selling out his "pre-emption right" and improvements, and again squatting somewhere else. Unfortunately the extent of Arkansas, and the swamp that surrounded Bob's location, kept it out of market, until, to use his own language, he "became the ancientest inhabitant in the hull of Arkansaw." And having, in spite of himself, gradually formed acquaintances with the few residents in this vicinity, and grown into importance from his knowledge of the country and his hunting exploits, he has

established himself for life, at what he calls the "Wasp's diggins," made a potato patch, which he has never had time to fence in, talked largely of a corn-field, and hung his cabin round with rifle pouches, gourds, red-peppers, and flaming advertisements with rampant horses and pedigrees; these latter ornaments he looks upon as rather sentimental, but he excuses himself on the ground that they look "hoss," and he considers such an expression as considerably resembling himself. We have stated that Bob's mind would puzzle three hundred metaphysicians consecutively, and we as boldly assert that an equal number of physiologists would be brought to a stand by his personal appearance. The left side of his face is good-looking, but the right side seems to be under the influence of an invisible air-pump; it looks sucked out of shape, his perpendicular height is six feet one inch, but that gives the same idea of his length that the diameter gives of the circumference; how long Bob Herring would be if he were drawn out is impossible to tell. Bob himself says, that he was made on too tall a scale for this world, and that he was shoved in, like the joints of a telescope. Poor in flesh, his enormous bones and joints rattle when he moves, and they would no

doubt have long since fallen apart, but for the enormous tendons that bind them together as visibly as a good-sized hawser would. Such is Bob Herring, who on a bear hunt will do more hard work, crack more jokes, and be more active, than any man living, sustaining the whole with unflinching good-humour, never getting angry except when he breaks his whiskey bottle, or has a favourite dog open on the wrong trail.

My first visit to the Devil's Summer Retreat was propitious, my companions were all choice spirits, the weather was fine, and Bob Herring inimitable. The bustling scene that prefaced the "striking the camp" for night lodgings, was picturesque and animated; a long ride brought us to our halting place, and there was great relief in again stepping on the ground. Having hobbled our horses, we next proceeded to build a fire, which was facilitated by taking advantage of a dead tree for a back-log; our saddles, guns, and other necessaries, were brought within the circle of its light, and lolling upon the ground we partook of a frugal supper, the better to be prepared for our morrow's exertions, and our anticipated breakfast. Beds were next made up, and few can be

better than a good supply of cane tops, covered with a blanket, with a saddle for a pillow; upon such a rude couch, the hunter sleeps more soundly than the effeminate citizen on his down. The crescent moon, with her attendant stars, studded the canopy under which he slept, and the blazing fire completely destroyed the chilliness of a southern December night.

The old adage of "early to bed and early to rise" was intended to be acted upon, that we might salute the tardy sun with the heat of our sport, and probably we would have carried out our intentions had not Bob Herring very coolly asked if any of us snored "unkimmonly loud," for he he said his old shooting iron would go off at a good imitation of a bear's breathing! This sally from Bob brought us all upright, and then there commenced a series of jibes, jokes, and stories, that no one can hear, or witness, except on an Arkansas hunt with "old coons." Bob, like the immortal Jack, was witty himself, and the cause of wit in others, but he sustained himself against all competition, and gave in his notions and experience with an unrivalled humour and simplicity. He found in me an attentive listener, and went into details, until he talked every one

but myself asleep. From general remarks, he changed to addressing me personally, and as I had everything to learn, he went from the elementary to the most complex experience. "You are green in bar hunting," said he to me, in a commiserating tone, and with a toss of the head that would have done honour to Mr. Brummel in his glory; "green as a jinson weed—but don't get short-winded 'bout it, case it's a thing like readin', to be larnt;—a man don't come it parfectly at once, like a dog does; and as for that, they larn a heap in time;—thar is a greater difference 'tween a pup and an old dog on a bar hunt than thar is 'tween a malitia man and a riglar. I remember when I couldn't bar hunt, though the thing seems onpossible now; it only requires time, a true eye, and steady hand, though I did know a fellow that called himself a doctor, that said that couldn't do it if you was narvious. I asked him if he meant by that agee and fever. He said it was the agee without the fever. Thar may be such a thing as narvious, stranger, but nothin' but a yarthquake, or the agee, can shake me; and still bar hunting ain't as easy as scearing a wild turkey, by a long shot. The varmint aint a hog, to run with a w—h—e—w; just corner one—cotch its cub, or cripple it, and if you don't have to

fight, or get out of the way, than thar ain't no cat-fish in the Mississip. I larnt that, nigh twenty year ago, and perhaps you would like to know about it?" Signifying my assent, Bob Herring got up in his bed, for as it was the bare ground he could not well get off of it, and, approaching the fire, he threw about a cord of wood on it, in the form of a few huge logs; as they struck the blazing heap the sparks flew upwards in the clear cold air, like a jet of stars; then fixing himself comfortably, he detailed what follows:—

"I had a knowing old sow at that time that would have made a better hunter than any dog ever heerd on; she had such a nose —talk 'bout a dog following a cold trail, she'd track a bar through running water. Well, you see, afor' I knowed her vartu', she came rushing into my cabin, bristles up, and fell on the floor, from what I now believe to have been regular sceare. I thought she'd seen a bar, for nothing else could make her run; and, taking down my rifle, I went out a sort a carelessly, with only two dogs at my heels. Hadn't gone far afore I saw a bar, sure enough, very quietly standing beside a small branch—it was an old *he*, and no mistake. I crawled up to him on my hands and

knees, and raised my rifle, but if I had fired I must have hit him so far in front, that the ball would have ranged back, and not cut his mortals. I waited, and he turned tail towards me, and started across the branch; afeerd I'd lose him, I blazed away, and sort a cut him slantindicularly through his hams, and brought him down; thar he sat, looking like a sick nigger with the dropsy, or a black bale of cotton turned up on eend. 'Twas not a judgmatical shot, and Smith thar" (pointing at one of the sleeping hunters) "would say so." Hereupon Bob Herring, without ceremony, seized a long stick, and thrust it into Smith's short ribs, who, thus suddenly awakened from a sound sleep, seized his knife, and, looking about him, asked, rather confusedly, what was the matter. "Would you," inquired Bob, very leisurely, "would you, under any circumstances, shoot an old *he* in the hams?" Smith very peremptorily told his questioner to go where the occupier of the Retreat in Summer is supposed to reside through the winter months, and went instantly to sleep again. Bob continued,—"Stranger, the bar, as I have said, was on his hams, and thar he sot, waiting to whip somebody and not knowing whar to begin, when the two dogs that

followed me came up, and pitched into him like a caving bank. I knowed the result afor the fight began; Brusher had his whole scalp, ears and all, hanging over his nose in a minute, and Tig was laying some distance from the bar, on his back, breathing like a horse with the thumps; he wiped them both out with one stroke of his left paw, and thar he sot, knowing as well as I did, that he was not obliged to the dogs for the hole in his carcass; and thar I stood, like a fool, rifle in hand, watching him, instead of giving him another ball. All of a sudden he caught a glimpse of my hunting shirt, and the way he walked at me with his two fore legs was a caution to slow dogs. I instantly fired, and stepped round behind the trunk of a large tree; my second shot confused the bar, and he was hunting about for me, when, just as I was patching my ball, he again saw me, and, with his ears nailed back to his head, he gave the d——t w—h—e—w I ever heerd, and made straight at me; I leaped up a bank near by, and as I gained the top my foot touched the eend of his nose. If I ever had the 'narvois' that was the time, for the skin on my face seemed an inch thick, and my eyes had more rings in them than a mad wild cat's. At this moment several of

my dogs, that war out on an expedition of their own, came up, and immediately made battle with the bar, who shook off the dogs in a flash, and made at me agin; the thing was done so quick, that, as I raised my rifle, I stepped back and fell over, and, thinking my time was come, wished I had been born to be hung, and not chaw'd up; but the bar didn't cotch me: his hind quarters, as he came at me, fell into a hole about a root, and caught. I was on my feet, and out of his reach in a wink, but, as quick as I did this, he had cut through a green root the size of my leg; he did it in about two snaps, but weakened by the exertion, the dogs got hold of him, and held on while I blowed his heart out. Ever since that time I have been wide awake with a wounded bar—*sartinly, or stand off*, being my motto. I shall dream of that bar to-night," concluded Bob, fixing his blanket over him; and a few moments only elapsed before he was in danger of his life, if his rifle would go off at a good imitation of a bear's breathing.

Fortunately for me, the sun on the following morn was fairly above the horizon before our little party was ready for the start. While breakfast was being prepared, the rifles were minutely examined; some were taken apart,

and every precaution used to ensure a quick and certain fire. A rude breakfast having been despatched, lots were drawn who should go into the *drive* with the dogs, as this task in the Devil's Summer Retreat is any thing but a pleasant one, being obliged at one time to walk on the bending cane—it is so thick for hundreds of yards that you cannot touch or see the ground—then crawling on your hands and knees, between its roots, sometimes brought to a complete halt, and obliged to cut your way through with your knife. While this is going on, the hunters are at *the stands*, places their judgments dictate as most likely to be passed by the bear, when roused by the dogs. Two miles might on this occasion have been passed over by those in the drive, in the course of three hours, and yet, although "signs were as plenty as leaves," not a bear was started. Hard swearing was heard, and as the vines encircled the feet, or caught one under the nose, it was increased. In the midst of this ill-humour, a solitary bark was heard; some one exclaimed that was Bose! another shrill yelp that sounded like Music's; breathing was almost suspended in the excitement of the moment; presently another, and another bark, was heard in quick succession; in a

minute more, *the whole pack of thirty-five staunch dogs opened!* The change from silence to so much noise made it almost deafening. No idea but personal demonstration can be had of the effect upon the mind, of such a pack baying a bear in a cane-break. Before me were old hunters; they had been moving along, as if destitute of energy or feeling, but now their eyes flashed, their lips were compressed, and their cheeks flushed; they seemed incapable of fatigue. As for myself, my feelings almost overcame me. I felt a cold sweat stealing down my back, my breath was thick and hot, and as I suspended it, to hear more distinctly the fight, for by this time the dogs had evidently come up with the bear, I could hear the pulsation of my heart. One minute more to listen, to learn which way the war was raging, and then our party unanimously sent forth a yell that would have frightened a nation of Indians. The bear was in his bed when the dogs first came up with him, and he did not leave it until the pack surrounded him; then finding things rather too warm, he broke off with a "whew" that was awful to hear. His course was towards us on the left, and as he went by, the cane cracked and smashed as if ridden over by an insane locomotive. Bob Herring gave the

dogs a salute as they passed close at the bear's heels, and the noise increased, until he said "It sounded as if all creation was pounding bark." The bear was commented on as he rushed by; one said he was "a buster." "A regular-built eight years old," said another. "Fat as a candle," shouted a third. "He's a beauty of the Devil's Summer Retreat, with a band of angels after him," sang out Bob Herring. On the bear plunged, so swiftly that our greatest exertions scarcely enabled us to keep within hearing distance; his course carried him towards those at the stands, but getting wind of them he turned and exactly retraced his course, but not with the same speed; want of breath had already brought him several times to a stand, and a fight with the dogs. He passed us the second time within two hundred yards, and coming against a fallen tree, backed up against it, and showed a determination, if necessary, there to die. We made our way towards the spot, as fast as the obstacles in our way would let us, the hunters anxious to despatch him, that as few dogs as possible might be sacrificed. The few minutes to accomplish this seemed months, the fight all the time sounding terrible, for every now and then the bear evidently made a rush at

the dogs, as they narrowed their circle, or came individually too near his person. Crawling through and over the cane-brake was a new thing to me, and in the prevailing excitement, my feet seemed tied together, and there *was always a vine directly under my chin*, to cripple my exertions. While thus struggling, I heard a suspicious cracking in my rear, and looking round I saw Bob Herring, a foot taller than common, stalking over the cane, like a colossus; he very much facilitated my progress, by a shove in the rear. "Come along, stranger," he shouted, his voice as clear as a bell, "come along, the bar and the dogs are going it, like a high-pressure nigger camp-meeting, and I must be thar to put a word in sartin." Fortunately for my wind I was nearer the contest than I imagined, for Bob Herring stopped just ahead of me, examined his rifle with two or three other hunters just arrived from the stands, and by peeping through the undergrowth, we discovered, within thirty yards of us, the fierce raging fight. Nothing distinctly, however, was seen; a confused mass of legs, heads, and backs of dogs, flying about as if attached to a ball, was all we could make out. A still nearer approach, and the confusion would clear off for a mo-

ment, and the head of the bear could be seen, with his tongue covered with dust, and hanging a foot from his mouth; his jaws were covered with foam and blood, his eyes almost protruding from their sockets, while his ears were so closely pressed to the back of his head, that he seemed destitute of those appendages; the whole indicative of unbounded rage and terror.

These glimpses of the bear were only momentary; his persecutors rested but for a breath, and then closed in, regardless of their own lives, for you could discover, mingled with the sharp bark of defiance, the yell that told of death. It was only while the bear was crushing some luckless dog, that they could cover his back, and lacerate it with their teeth. One of the hunters, in spite of the danger, headed by Bob Herring, crept upon his knees, so near that it seemed as if another foot advanced would bring them within the circle of the fight. Bob Herring was first within safe shooting distance to save the dogs, and waving has hand to those behind him, he raised his rifle and sighted, but his favourite dog, impatient for the report, anticipated it by jumping on the bear, who throwing up his head at the same instant, the bear received the ball in his nose.

At the crack of the rifle, the well-trained dogs, thinking less caution than otherwise necessary, jumped pell-mell on the bear's back, and the hardest fight ever witnessed in the Devil's Summer Retreat ensued; the hunter, with Bob, placed his gun almost against the bear's side, and the cap snapped; no one else was near enough to fire without hitting the dogs.—"Give him the knife!" cried those at a distance. Bob Herring's long blade was already flashing in his hand, but sticking a living bear is not a child's play; he was standing undecided, when he saw the hind legs of Bose upwards; thrusting aside one or two of the dogs with his hand, he made a pass at the bear's throat, but the animal was so quick that he struck the knife with his fore paw, and sent it whirling into the distant cane; another was instantly handed him, which he thrust at the bear, but the point was so blunt that it would not penetrate the skin. Foiled a third time, with a tremendous oath on himself and the owner of the knife "that wouldn't stick a cabbage," he threw it indignantly from him, and seizing unceremoniously a rifle, just then brought up by one of the party, heretofore in the rear, he, regardless of his own legs, thrust it against the side of the bear

with considerable force, and blowed him through; the bear struggled but for a moment, and fell dead. "I saw snakes last night in my dreams," said Bob, handing back the rifle to its owner, "and I never had any good luck the next day, arter such a sarcumstance; I call this hull hunt about as mean an affair as damp powder; that bar thar," pointing to the carcass, "that thar, ought to have been killed, afor he maimed a dog." Then, speaking energetically, he said, "Boys, never shoot at a bar's head, even if your iron is in his ear, it's unsartin; look how I missed the brain, and only tore the smellers; with fewer dogs and sich a shot, a fellow would be ripped open in a powder flash; and I say, cuss caps, and head shooting; they would have cost two lives to-day, but for them ar dogs, God bless 'em."

With such remarks, Bob Herring beguiled away the time, while he, with others, skinned the bear. His huge carcass, when dressed, though not over fat, looked like a young steer's. The dogs, as they recovered breath, partook of the refuse with relish; the nearest possible route out of the Devil's Retreat was selected, and two horse loads took the meat into the open woods, where it was divided out in such a manner that it could be taken home.

Bob Herring, while the dressing of the bear was going on, took the skin, and on its inside surface, which glistened like satin, he carefully deposited the caul fat, that looked like drifted snow, and beside it the liver; the choice parts of the bear, according to the gourmand notions of the frontier, were in Bob's possession; and many years' experience had made him so expert in cooking it, that he was locally famed for this matter above all competitors. It would be as impossible to give the recipe for this dish, so that it might be followed by the gastronomes of cities, as it would to have the articles composing it exposed for sale in the markets. Bob Herring managed as follows: he took a long wooden skewer, and having thrust its point through a small piece of bear fat, he followed it by a small piece of the liver, then the fat, then the liver, and so on, until his most important material was consumed; when this was done, he opened the "bear's handkerchief," or caul, and wrapped it round the whole, and thus roasted it before the fire. Like all the secrets in cookery, this dish depends for its flavour and richness upon exactly giving the proper quantities, as a superabundance of one or the other would completely spoil the dish. "I was always unlucky, boys," said

Bob, throwing the bear skin and its contents over his shoulder, "but I've had my fill often of caul fat and liver; many a man who thinks he's *lucky*, lives and dies ignorant of its virtue, as a 'possum is of corn cake. If I ever look dead, don't bury me until you see I don't open my eyes when it's ready for eating; if I don't move when you show me it, then I am a done goner sure." Night closed in before we reached our homes, the excitement of the morning wore upon our spirits and energy, but the evening's meal of caul fat and liver, and other similar "fixins," or Bob Herring's philosophical remarks, restored me to perfect health, and I shall recollect that supper, and its master of ceremonies, as harmonious with, and as extraordinary as is, the Devil's Summer Retreat.

XIV.

SLAYING AN ASSASSIN.

CHAPTER I.

In one of the south-western sections of the United States of America there is a large district of country called the Barrens, so named because the greater part of the earth is covered only with a species of tall coarse grass, interspersed with myriads of flowers, and occasional clumps of dwarf oak, having the expressive name of Black Jack. The heavy forest trees appear only along the larger streams of water. The soil is generally of a reddish clay, covered with a few inches of dark mould from the decayed leaves and the burning of the long dry grass in the autumn. But this deposit is soon worn off the highways, and, the red clay becoming exposed, makes a strong contrast with the green grass through which the road winds,

revealing its course to the traveller, sometimes for miles a-head, as it passes over the eminences in the distance.

On a hot afternoon in July I was riding along one of these roads, my sweating horse moving heavily under me, whilst I was suffering intensely from the heat, notwithstanding a large umbrella over my head. I could see for miles around me, and there was no sign of a habitation anywhere, nothing met my gaze but the pale blue sky over my head, the immense masses of white, fleecy, bright clouds piled up above the horizon, and the sea of green grass spread out around me, over which arose the dancing appearance of the air like that above a kiln.

After travelling some miles under these circumstances, I perceived, at the distance of about half a mile to the left of the road, the tops of several trees which seemed to rise but a few feet above the ground. I knew at a glance that they stood in one of those basins or sinks peculiar to this region, and that I should find a cool refreshing shade, if not, as was very probable, the mouth of a cave. I therefore bent my course through the grass to the spot, my horse making his way as through a grain field, and nipping now and then some attractive herb much to the annoyance of my bridle hand.

As I approached the basin my horse elevated his head, pointed his ears forward, first moving with increased animation, and then suddenly stopping. These movements gave me some uneasiness, lest there should be some wild animal in the thicket below; I therefore stopped for an instant on the margin of the sink, and looked down into it to discover, if possible, what had alarmed my beast. The sink was about thirty yards in the greatest diameter, of an oval form, full forty feet deep at its centre, and was filled with beautiful trees and under-growth, almost alive with birds.

As I perceived nothing which could account for my horse's alarm, I attempted to urge him down the sloping side of the basin, but he pricked his ears and stood stiff in his tracks. I laid on the whip, but he wheeled suddenly round and dashed off some yards before I could pull him up. Fixing myself firmly in my saddle, and tightening my reins, I lashed the alarmed animal again to the margin of the basin, but no exertion could induce him to make one step down the declivity. While contending with him, and just as I was thinking of dismounting, I heard a voice cry out, "Get off, and lead him down." I stared in the direction of the

voice, but not being able to see the person, I called out in the tone and manner of that country, "Halloo there!"

"Get off, get off," answered the voice in a very familiar way.

"Where are you?" asked I.

"Here," replied the voice. Then the bushes began to crackle with the passage of some one through them, and in a moment there emerged from them a gigantic-framed, bareheaded old man, dressed in a light blue hunting shirt and leathern leggings, his hands covered with blood, and in one of them a large butcher's knife. My hair stood on end, and my horse, still more alarmed, sprang back and nearly threw me.

"Get off, man," said he in the most familiar and careless manner imaginable.

"What have you been doing?" I demanded.

"Hitch your nag thar to that saplin, an' come down here, an' I'll show you as fine a fire prong as ever h'isted tail."

"You've killed a buck, then?" said I, as I dismounted.

"But we had a tough time after him, not happ'nin' to have a dog along."

I tied my horse securely to a limb of the sapling indicated, and then penetrated the

bushes with the old hunter to the spot where the immense buck lay, still bleeding from a large wound in the throat—such as are inflicted by these men of the wilds to reach the animal's heart, an operation which they term *sticking*.

"That's a fine buck," said I.

Giving a grave look of satisfaction as he shook the head by one of the deer's horns, he answered, with a slight pause between each word, "You may say that. It aint every day, in these barrens, you'll down such a fellor."

"Is there any water in this sink? I am excessively thirsty."

"Thar an't not a drop of runnin' water nearer this spot than the Grove."

I found some consolation, however, for the want of water, in the refreshing coolness of the sink. The spot where we were was an open space of ten or twelve feet, free from under-growth, and so protected by the thick foliage of the overhanging trees that the direct rays of the sun had not perhaps for years entered it. It was, consequently, as cool almost as an ice-house. I took off my hat to enjoy it more fully, and sat myself down on a stone, while the old hunter was deliberately preparing, with the aid of his

elt, to hang up the buck by the hind feet o the limb of a small tree, in order that the lood might fully escape.

"I thought you said '*We* had a tough time vith the buck?' You are alone."

"Oh! why they're gone back for a horse; n' Jack 'll soon be back, for he's a tearer unnin' an' ridin'. You see," pulling up the uck, "he'd make a body's back ache a spell o toat him over the Grove sich a day as this."

"Shall I assist you to hang him up?"

"Why, I don't keer if you do gi' me a it of a lift—he's a whopper. Take keer of he blood; jist hold on to the limb. A dead imber animal makes an unhandy lift, you an't get no purchase."

We presently had the buck swinging from he limb. I resumed my seat upon the stone, nd the old hunter, after wiping his bloody ands with leaves, threw himself full length pon the grass and weeds, to wait leisurely he coming of the horse. There he lay, with countenance immoveable as an Indian's. His face was remarkably large, wrinkled and anned, with bright blue eyes, overhung by enormous grey eyebrows, which were almost continuous with thick hair of the same colour hanging so as to cover nearly the whole forehead. Looking carelessly up at me, he began

the usual introduction of such persons to a regular attack of inquisitiveness—one of the attributes of a backwoodsman.

"Trav'lin' fur, stranger?"

"To Nashville."

"That's over in Tennessee, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, now how fur do you call it from hereabouts?"

"It is, perhaps, a hundred miles."

"Your nag's purty wild, ain't it?"

"Yes, he's a young traveller."

"You'll have to be careful ridin' too fast sich hot weather. You'll do him up."

"I am."

"Well, now that's what we ought to a dumb beast, though it ain't everybody that is. Some folks ain't got no feelin' for nothin' only jist themselves."

With the hope of cutting short his string of interrogations, I asked if sufficient time had not elapsed for the return of his companion. "Not yet," carelessly uttered, was his reply; whereupon he returned to the charge evidently determined to satisfy himself before he stopped."

"Come from the upper counties, I reckon?"

"Yes."

"Well, if it's no offence, what mout your name be?"

"Jones."

"You ain't no kin to Hugh Jones that went to the legislatur, maybe?"

"Not at all."

"I've seed him many a time at the musters. He's staunch for Ball, and thar's a good many in these parts that is. Who are they goin' to vote for, for gov'nor, in your parts?"

"Indeed I'm not able to tell."

"I ain't for Ball myself, for all we're purty much namesaked. He ain't jist overloaded with sense for a gov'nor."

"Then your name's Ball, is it?"

"Why in these here parts I go by it anyhow; Peter Ball 's the name my daddy gave me, and I never used no other."

"You're very fond of hunting I should think?"

"I like a good hunt. Only I was jist a thinkin' maybe you staid last night at the Knob?"

"No."

"Bill Todd's, maybe, o' this side?"

"Yes, I staid at Todd's."

"I never was up that way much; I've hearn talk about Todd's. Good 'commodations for travellers thar, they say."

"Yes, pretty good."

"Bill's a clever fellow, I expect?"

"No doubt."

"Only some thinks he ain't altogether the straight thing in dealin'."

I made no reply. He took up his gun from his side, threw it over him, and, sitting upright, began to examine the lock, while he continued talking, with his attention equally divided between the gun and my late host.

"Ned Saunders, when he lived up by the Knob, had a suit with Bill Todd 'bout a cow; and they say they'd some mighty tough swearin' atween 'em." Here he threw out the priming, and carefully wiped the pan of his gun lock. "Ned knows our Sam, an' he tol' him a pack o' stuff about Bill." Having reprimed his rifle, he proceeded to examine the trigger and sights. "Ned's a cute feller himself, tradin' or swoppin' of a horse; and maybe it ain't jist all gospel." With a piece of tow he wiped the barrel from one end to the other. "Dick Todd, down here in the Grove, is a man as straight as a shingle, an' as first-rate a shot as ever pulled trigger."

The old hunter now raised up his head in the attitude of intense listening, and then told me that Jack was coming—he heard the horse. In a few moments I myself could distinguish a singular sound, which I knew

to arise from the galloping of a horse through the grass. As it approached us, all of a sudden we heard a crack like the snapping of a stick—then the snort of a horse—and in the next moment the sound of an animal dashing through the bushes and into the grass. "It's your nag broke loose," said the hunter, as we both sprang out of the thicket. My horse was gone. We ran out of the sink and discovered him, head and tail up, bounding through the grass, with the long-legged Jack in chase after him, mounted, bare-back, with a halter in place of a bridle, upon a little raw-boned, long-tailed, spradling-gaited colt, whose galloping approach had the moment before startled my fugitive beast.

"Stop thar, Jack," bawled out the old hunter, with the voice of a trumpet, "let him be, you fool!"

"Let us surround him," said I.

"No, no; you stand off thar. You Jack, hitch the colt to that saplin' on the edge of the sink, and then keep off roun' that side. We'll go," addressing me, "jist keerless-like off a bit this away. He'll make up to the colt, if we let him be a leetle, and then we kin easy ketch him." Matters were arranged accordingly, and the result was as the hunter had anticipated. My horse, after kicking up

his heels, curving his neck, and snorting a few times, gradually became composed, and making a circle went up to the colt. After putting their noses together, and squealing two or three times, the two animals made each other's acquaintance, and my horse was secured. But my saddle-bags had fallen off in the grass, which required some search before they were found; but the head-stall of my bridle was not to be found; I was therefore compelled to use the reins (which had remained attached to the sapling) as a halter to lead my horse, while I walked home with the hunter and his son. For, upon grave deliberation, this was determined to be the wisest course, as Ball had a neighbour who owned a real stylish plated-bit bridle, "that he'd be sure to sell when he seed the silver," whereas in the thinly-settled open Barrens it was a considerable distance to any cabin, and there was little probability of arriving before nightfall at a "house of entertainment"—travelling on the hot road on foot as I should be compelled to do.

The buck was fastened over the colt's back, who, being accustomed to such portering, was led quietly on; after Jack in the van, the old hunter took the centre, and I brought up the rear, leading my troublesome steed,

who would not suffer me to hoist my umbrella. Ball had quite as much occupation in pushing up the buck, first on one side then on the other, to preserve the necessary equipoise, so that there was little or no conversation between us as we went wading along through the grass, one after the other, like so many Indians, exposed to the direct rays of a burning sun. Now and then, however, we found some refuge from the heat under the clumps of Black Jacks, without whose occasional shade I could not have borne the fatigues of the walk. After making several miles, the ground gradually ascended for five or six hundred yards, and we found ourselves on the top of a ridge from which we beheld the Grove scarce half a mile distant. I shall never forget how beautiful it appeared to me. Wearied, scorched in the sun, parched with thirst, and worn out with my walk through the hot and dreary open plains, I looked to the far-spreading woods as to a promised land; and, with a good deal of impatience, repeatedly urged the leisurely-moving Jack to quicken his gait. At last we entered the Grove, and bade farewell to the plains of grass and intense heat, for the scene had at once changed to the very reverse. Here in the deep woods the sun was so completely

excluded that the moist ground was only covered with short green sward, while the crowded trees limited the prospect to a few yards. Taking off my hat, I expressed the extreme delight I felt at finding myself in the change.

"Well, it's not jist so hot as comin' up that ridge," said the old hunter with almost a smile.

"But when shall we come to the water?"

"Why if you don't mind the brush, we bear a leetle off to the right, an' git to the creek considerably quicker."

"I shall not regard pushing through the underwood; let us take the shortest course to the water, for I'm really suffering very much with thirst."

"Agreed," said Ball, in his usual slow and indifferent manner. "I'm purty dry myself, for I ain't tasted a drop since the sun wasn't near straight (long before twelve o'clock). We wasn't a huntin' when we seed the buck this mornin', an' hadn't no canteen, nor nothin' long with us."

Presently we came to the clear rapid little stream, running hurriedly over its gravelly and sandy bed. My poor horse was ungovernable—he plunged at once into the water; holding to the reins, I dipped my leathern

ap into the delicious fluid, and drank to my full satisfaction. The old hunter turned up the brim of his old wool hat, and filling the space between it and the crown, by immersing it in the stream, soon satisfied his thirst.

As Jack's hat was not stiff enough to serve the purpose of a cup, he threw himself flat upon the gravelly margin, and, resting with his hands in the stream itself, put his mouth to the current at no great distance from that of the colt.

"Water 's a capital thing when a body 's real dry," said Ball.

"Yes, I'll be darned if it ain't," uttered Jack, as he rose to his feet, with many a drop trickling from his foretop, nose, and chin, all of which had come in contact, as well as his lips, with the water.

After due praises of the goodness of water under our circumstances, we took up our line of march. I trusted to my halter for riding my horse the few steps over the creek; Ball and Jack both took off their shoes, rolled up their trowsers, and waded across. It was now, the old man "reckoned," about a mile to his habitation.

Not long after leaving the creek we fell into a small pathway, which, after a while, led us through a remarkably dense thicket,

when Jack, who had not spoken but once before since our departure from the sink, suddenly halted, and in a voice of great agitation—his eyes staring open—cried out, "Daddy! I'll tell ye what, if I didn't see Tom Hinkle, this here ain't no buck."

"Where abouts?" demanded the old man very coolly, but with very evident concern.

"Don't you see yon shell-bark?" pointing to a large hickory tree, "Well, jist by it I seed his powder-horn movin' along."

The old hunter leisurely but instantly examined his gun lock, saw that its pan was well filled with priming, shouldered his gun again, and ordered Jack to keep a good look-out, and go on.

I felt somewhat disturbed at all this, and inquired of Ball what it meant. Keeping his eyes perpetually moving in every direction, while he was speaking in broken sentences, he enabled me to gather that Tom Hinkle was one of those foreign wretches, who find their way here and there into, and infect, many of the newly-settled parts of this country—a sort of men, who, reared in pauperism, and educated in armies or piratical vessels, are filled with the worst passions and the lowest impulses of our nature; depending chiefly upon fraud for

support, defying all restraint, and spending most of their time in the vilest dissipation. It seems that Hinkle had defrauded a neighbour of Ball's out of a horse; that this neighbour had prosecuted Hinkle for a forgery committed in the transaction; that Ball's evidence had nearly proved sufficient to convict Hinkle of the crime, which would have caused him to be imprisoned in the Penitentiary; that Hinkle had sworn to take Ball's life for "his interference;" that "he was devil enough to do it;" and, indeed, that he had upon two occasions, when Ball's two grown sons were from home, as was now the case, attempted the diabolical act.

"Do you really think," I inquired, "that Hinkle will make another attempt upon your life now, when your son and I are both with you?"

"You've got no guns, an' Hinkle aint agoin to come too close. If it's him, an' he's after me, he'll take a shot an' split for it. He's as big a coward as ever run."

"Are you sure that Jack saw any one?"

"That's no doubt, an' I reckon it was Hinkle. Jack's got a sharp eye, an' Polly thought t'other day she had a glimpse of him prowlin' roun' the tobaccor pen. His powder horn can't easy be mistook, for it's striped of a red and blue."

"Would it not be your best place to——"

"By jingo, that's him now!" cried Ball, and instantly heard the report of a gun from the bushes not twenty steps off. Hinkle had fired at Ball, but missed him.

There stood the sturdy old hunter, planted firmly on the earth; his cheek to his rifle, his eye pointing along its barrel directly at his enemy, and his finger ready to spring its hair trigger,—the slightest touch of which would have caused the deadly ball to fly at his enemy's head. Rigidly maintaining his position and aim, the old man called out in a distinct and composed voice—"Come out, Tom Hinkle, or I'll fire!" Looking closely at the spot from which the smoke of Hinkle's gun was still rising, I could plainly discover amidst the leaves his head and breast.

"Shoot him, daddy," cried Jack.

"Come out from the bushes," repeated Ball.

"Fire, daddy."

"For God's sake," cried I, "don't disturb your father!" for, strange now to think, I felt at that moment willing that the fiendish scoundrel should be shot.

There passed a moment of intense and anxious suspense; Hinkle standing petrified in the bushes, glaring like a wild

animal at the old hunter whose deadly aim rested immoveably on him; Jack holding the halter of the colt, laden with the dead buck on one side of his father; and I near my horse on the other—all facing the devoted skulker.

"Are you commin' out?" demanded Ball, in a voice of slight impatience.

"If t'other two will keep off, I will," answered the desperate and alarmed Hinkle.

"You needn't be afeerd of them, they shan't interfer'."

"But how do I know that?"

"Are you commin' out?" said Ball decidedly.

"Yes, I am; let them two hold up their hands and make oath they'll keep off."

Jack having the utmost confidence in his father's ability to compete with Hinkle, especially under existing circumstances, instantly raised one hand and bawled out, "I'll be durned if I'll go near you!" I called out to him that I could not take an oath for such a wretch; but that I gave him my word not to interfere.

He then came slowly and timidly out of the bushes into a more open space, holding his gun in his left hand, with its butt near the ground; Ball raised his head, but still kept

his rifle pointed at him. Catching a glimpse of hope from this state of affairs, he addressed the old man in a loud voice, and with a manner half assured and half conciliatory. "Ball, do you think if I hadn't wanted just to scare you, I couldn't hit you easy enough? You've seen Tom Hinkle shoot at a mark;" and he halted for a parley within arm's length of a tree, about thirty feet distant from the pathway in which our party stood.

"Drop your smooth bore," said Ball, taking no notice of Hinkle's subterfuge.

"What! an empty gun?" repeated Hinkle, with affected surprise and carelessness.

"You'd better drop it," said Ball, drily, as he replaced his face to regain his aim.

"She's empty, I tell you; what are you afeerd of?"

"I aint afeerd of Tom Hinkle, nor no sich coward; but that aint the rifle you fired at me; it's another gun, and she's got a load in her."

"Yes, she has," interrupted Jack; "she's crammed with slugs for a scatterin' shot; for if that aint Hugh Fry's smooth bore, I never seed a gun."

"Now, you know, Ball," said Hinkle, about to remonstrate against Jack's interference.

"Hol' you gab, Jack," bellowed Ball, in a tone that effectually checked both. "Now, down wi' that gun;" he added, in a manner that showed there was to be no delay.

"Well,—then," uttered the scoundrel, with apparent resignation; and then lowering his hand half way to the ground, he suddenly sprang behind the tree. "Now, Ball," he exclaimed, in tones of defiance, "keep off, or you are a dead man!"

"Jack and I looked at each other in utter amazement; for we had considered Hinkle completely in the power of his antagonist. Now, as if by magic, he had the advantage in the conflict; for, besides being much the younger and more active man, he was behind a tree, while Ball stood in the pathway unprotected.

"Make for the tree, daddy, behin' the colt," cried Jack.

"No, I shan't, you fool;" with feigned disdain, and, quick as lightning, he gained the very position indicated by Jack. For a moment after this movement not a syllable was uttered. Each of the combatants seemed undetermined what to do. Fearing that Hinkle might take it into his fiendish head to shoot Jack, who stood now in the direct line between the other two, I beckoned to

him to remove to my safer position, which he did. As he joined me, comprehending my motive, he said, "He's too big a coward to shoot at me; he knows if he was to empty his gun at me, daddy would have him certain."

Ball and Hinkle, with their guns elevated ready to be levelled at the first advantage, were engaged peeping and drawing their heads back behind their respective trees; both no doubt still undecided as to further steps, should their present position continue much longer.

"I wish," said Jack, in an under tone, "he was a little bit furder from where he shot at daddy, I'd git his rifle."

"You really think he had two guns?"

"May be he hadn't! that's jist like a coward,—for fear he couldn't load quick enough, if he didn' hit first time."

They were still watching each other,—peeping, drawing back, half-levelling their guns as they thought some advantage existed, and then shrinking suddenly back as it passed away; while Jack, whose solicitude for his father would not allow him to be an idle spectator, put the colt's halter into my hand, and then throwing himself on his hands and feet, stole, noiselessly as a cat,

towards the spot where he supposed Hinkle had left his rifle.

I began to reflect that two guns in the hands of brave men, ought not to be opposed to one in the hands of a coward, however criminal or fiendish he had been; and I felt gratified with the conviction that the brave old hunter would not give Jack the means of loading the gun if he should find it.

At last, Hinkle, worn out with the fruitless watchings to gain some advantage, or to escape from his adversary, and hearing something moving behind him, from the spot where he had fired, called out, in a voice that rang through the woods,—"Ball, promise me you won't touch me with your rifle, and 'pon the honour of a man I'll give up fair." The old hunter took not the least notice of this overture, thinking, perhaps how little confidence was to be placed in the words of so perfidious a wretch.

The next moment, Jack, with a face flushed to crimson, dashed out, bearing the rifle uplifted in his hand; and, filled with vengeance at the sight of the gun which had just been discharged at his father, he exclaimed, as he made his way to the old man, "Here, daddy's the lyin' coward's rifle, gi' me a load!"

Hinkle, not doubting that he was to have

two armed adversaries, dashed off; and, at the same moment, Ball's gun was discharged after him. But the bushes continued to crackle, and I saw Hinkle making his way with prodigious strides. Ball was already in pursuit, reloading his gun as he ran, with Jack close behind, bellowing for a "load." In a moment they were all out of sight in the thicket. I hitched the horses as quietly as possible and followed on. I immediately found evidence that the old hunter's aim, suddenly as it was taken, had been unerring; for I found blood every few yards on the bushes. When I had made my way through the thicket, the woods were comparatively free from undergrowth, and I could discover the fugitive and his pursuers close upon him, near a hundred yards in advance of me. They gained on him every instant. At last, when he found he must inevitably be overtaken, he turned upon his pursuers; and he and Ball, at the same instant, levelled their guns and fired. Jack fell to the ground, and Ball and Hinkle were the next moment clasping each other in a desperate personal conflict.

As I gained the scene of action, Jack sat up and pressed his hands below his knees, where he had received the ball. Almost out

of breath, and without any definite aim in the confusion of the moment, I approached the wrestling and gory combatants—for they were both besmeared with blood.

"Keep off, if you're a man," cried Hinkle, in a hoarse altered voice, fearing my co-operation with his deadly antagonist.

"For your life, stand off," cried Ball, equally unwilling to be assisted or separated. Their guns, hats, and parts of their torn clothing, lay scattered around; while panting, their faces flushed, and staring at each other like demons, they continued their furious combat. Hinkle made a desperate effort to throw Ball on the ground, but he kept his feet, and, throwing his head and shoulders forward, gave Hinkle a violent shove, which forced him several steps back before he recovered his balance. Hinkle now snatched the handle of his butcher knife, which hung in his belt; Ball jerked him forward to counteract his design, but the blade escaped from the scabbard, and Hinkle thrust it at Ball's breast, who, grasping its sharp edge in his naked hand, with one act slung it from his own breast and Hinkle's grasp. As if this had added to his rage, Ball gave one furious lunge, and his enemy rolled upon the earth—yet clutched in battle.

Sick at the horrid spectacle, I moved towards them to draw them asunder; but Jack, who had crawled up to the spot, stood on one knee, holding a gun butt uppermost, and, with the look of a fury, threatened to knock out my brains if I touched the combatants.

They were becoming excessively exhausted, but they fought on, sometimes one above—sometimes the other. At last, Hinkle was unable to extricate himself from beneath Ball; but he suddenly got both hands around Ball's neck, and made a fiendish attempt to choke him—but he was too feeble for the act. Ball jerked up his head, and, without difficulty, disengaged his clutched throat; then, putting his knee on Hinkle's breast, he drew his butcher knife, pointed it to his breast,—when I grasped his arm.

Jack held the gun over my head menacing a blow; Ball glared his wild blood-shot eyes in my face—and poor Hinkle was closing his for ever.

"Let go his arm," cried the strange-looking son.

"Let me go," cried the desperate father.

"The man is dead," I replied.

Jack lowered the gun. And Ball, looking in the face of his dying enemy, with a coun-

tenance in which surprise and horror were newly mixed with almost demoniacal ire, arose slowly off his body. Then, rough as was his nature, and furious as had just been his passion, the old hunter dropped upon the ground and fainted away.

XV.

SLAYING AN ASSASSIN.

CHAPTER II.

TRIAL AND FUNERAL.

PASSING over the sad scene that followed at Ball's house, and the interview between the old man and his agonized wife, we proceed with our story. Ball resolved upon making an immediate surrender, and, accompanied by his neighbour Burns, his son, and myself, set out on his manly errand. We rode on for a while perfectly silent. In the course of our ride we made every possible effort to draw him into conversation, and to force him to think of the surrounding objects; without success however, for he listened vacantly, answered "Yes" or "No," and relapsed into his severe and gloomy silence. About a mile before we reached the house of the magistrate, a young man, on a very

spirited horse, emerged from the woods a few yards ahead of us; he stopped at the mouth of the little path until we rode up; he had evidently heard of the business to be transacted at the magistrate's that morning, and was on his way to witness it, for he stared at Ball with that sort of stupid solemnity which most uneducated people think is necessarily to be worn on such occasions. Burns's vexation at the young man's manner, and his desire to prevent its having any unpleasant effect on Ball, induced him to speak rather rudely to our new companion. "What are you sitting there on your prancing nag like a fool for?" cried Burns to him, in a voice of thunder that made the youth start. "Will your father be at Squire Buckley's too?"

"Yes, sir," answered the young man not very audibly; "he's there now, I expect, he started a good while before me."

"Well then," said Burns, "I'll tell you what, the best thing you can do is just to ride on as fast as you please, and tell them we'll be after you in a jiffy." Away went the young man at a brisk trot ahead of us.

"I hate a fool," continued Burns, "and above all a young one like that fellow, that hardly knows how to curry a horse. I'll tell you what, if there's a parcel of numbskulls

at the squire's, I'll turn every rascal of them out of the room, plague me if I don't."

"Oh, its no odds, Harry," said Ball, with much less depression of manner; "I don't keer who's ther, or ef all the neighbourhood comes."

"Well, plague me if I don't, then. I'll tell you what, I've no notion of having a parcel of open-mouthed, pop-eyed blockheads about when I've got anything to do."

"Well, well," said Ball, "never mind this time; ef there's ever so many, I wouldn't like you in particular to find any fault about anybody being ther."

"Agreed; for I'll tell you what, Peter, our meeting Dick Tomkins has made you a confounded sight less a blockhead than you have been all the way on the road, and may be, if there's a grist of them at the squire's, you'll get your senses back and behave like a man."

Ball looked steadily at Burns for a moment, as if deliberating what reply to make; but then he turned away his eyes without uttering a word.

"Peter," said Burns, with a kindness of manner that contrasted strangely with his coarse tones and rough language; "Peter, if you think I hav'n't got proper feeling about

this business, I can tell you one thing, you've lost your road; but devil dance me if I'm going to humour your foolishness, especially now, when we are almost at Buckley's, and the whole thing is to be tried and over."

"Harry," said Ball, "you're right."

"To be sure I am; now, hang it, man, pluck up; if you don't care for yourself, nor me neither, just remember you've got seven children, and I've got five; and then, Peter, our children have mothers, and they've all got such things as ears, and feelings into the bargain, I can tell you that."

"Harry," repeated Ball, with some animation, "I say you're right."

"To be sure, to be sure," said Burns; and, addressing me, he added, "You see the thing clear enough, stranger?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Now, Peter," continued Burns, "I'll tell you what, I don't want you at all up any way, but plague me if I'd like you to be down in the mouth, no shape, at the squire's; there's Buckley's fence, and we shall be there in a twinkling; so I depend on you, if it comes in the way, to call Hinkle a rascal every bit as often as if the scoundrel was alive ready again to take your life in the cowardly way he tried it."

Our road led us round the outer fence of the magistrate's farm to a lane which divided it into nearly equal parts.

There were about a hundred and fifty acres under cultivation, chiefly in Indian corn. The tall fences, the extensive stabling, the abundance of cattle in the pastures and standing in the lane, as is usual in this country, and the large orchard near the dwelling, gave unequivocal evidence that we were approaching one of the principal men of the neighbourhood. We now perceived a great many horses hitched to the posts of the yard fence, and several groups of persons in the yard and on the fence, for there is a singular propensity in this country to sit, perched up on the top rail of a fence, with the feet lodged on one of the rails to secure the position, while conversation, or argument, or a "bargain," is driven leisurely on. As we rode up to the fence every eye was turned upon us; no one approached, however, but the magistrate, who was ready to greet us the moment we dismounted, performing the rights of hospitality before he assumed the duties of a magistrate. Burns crossed the blocks into the yard first, Ball followed; the squire shook us all by the hand very heartily, when the whole company came forward and did likewise.

After this we were pressed to take some refreshment, which being declined, Ball opened his business in coming there by saying, "Squire, I've killed Tom Hinkle, an' I've come to give myself up." No one uttered a syllable, but there was not a face that did not strongly express, as regards the killing, "Amen." The squire proposed holding the court under the trees in the yard, on account of the warmth of the morning and the number of persons present, for the news had spread like lightning over the neighbourhood, and everybody was curious to know and see as much of the matter as possible. In a few minutes a number of chairs and a table were brought forth and arranged in the yard, and the court was opened. The whole scene was exceedingly strange and interesting to me. The yard was so covered with locust trees, a few forest oaks spreading out their broad arms far above, that scarcely a direct ray of the sun fell upon the thick-set green grass that hid the earth.

The chairs were arranged irregularly on each side and in front of the table, behind which sat two magistrates.

At a few yards distance, on one side, was the comfortable two-story log-house, from the

ground-floor windows of which looked the wife and daughters of Squire Buckley, and other females; the chairs under the trees were occupied by some of the homespun-dressed company, while others stood behind or leaned against the trees. Squire Buckley, with his perfectly white head (he must have been at least sixty) and quiet sensible face, had at his side a brother magistrate much younger, with a narrow forehead, round face, and immense lower jaw. Ball was seated in front of the table, in the space between the irregular rows of chairs, with Burns and myself near him; a little distance from the court, between it and the fence along which without stood the horses, were several negroes, slaves of Buckley, whose black faces gazed intently on the scene. Squire Buckley called on Ball to state what he had to say: the old man rose, and, with a composure and clearness I was not prepared to expect from him, alluded to the chief points, and then offered me as a witness of the whole affair. I gave substantially an account of everything from my encounter with Ball at the sink to our departure from the scene of action between Ball and Hinkle. All present listened with breathless silence; Ball kept his eyes fixed on the grass; Squire Buckley

maintained throughout a calm, steady attention, and then with great mildness of manner cross-examined me. Burns was the only person whose attention was not wholly given to the testimony and the examination; he was, during the whole time, watching the countenances of the company, to ascertain if there was the slightest feeling in the bystanders against Ball; and it was evident enough from the expression of his own countenance that he detected nothing disagreeable to him. The two magistrates leaned their elbows on the table and consulted together for a moment or two, when Buckley rose, and, with a fine deep voice, said, "Peter Ball, we are of the opinion that Hinkle himself brought about the circumstance that forced you to take his life in defence of your own. There are no grounds whatever for committing you for trial, and you are now discharged free from all blame."

In an instant the whole scene was changed; the silence and order which had just reigned were gone, and the bustling noisy congratulations of Ball's neighbours showed that he had been rather raised than lowered in their estimation by his battle and victory over the detested Hinkle. Though Squire Buckley insisted on our stopping for dinner, Ball's im-

patience to return to his family, and Burns' desire to have Hinkle interred and out of the way as soon as possible, made us decline his hospitality, and we set off immediately, accompanied by ten or a dozen of the company. On our way back every one perceived Ball's extreme depression and misery of mind. The effort he had just made at the squire's was now followed by a deeper gloom than I had before noticed in him. Every one tried, in some way, to lessen his depression, but with the effect, however, of oppressing him intolerably. In consequence of this I rode close by his side, to interrupt, as much as possible, this annoyance. I now thought I perceived symptoms of approaching alienation of mind in the old man; for, instead of the thoughtful character of his rough visage, his countenance repeatedly expressed alternation of torpor and momentarily excessive alarm. On our return to Ball's house, we found eight or ten persons collected there in the yard; his wife and daughter were at the fence deadly pale and trembling with anxiety. The moment we dismounted a scene of congratulations took place between those in the yard and Ball, similar to that at the squire's; as soon, however, as possible, I got him into the house with his family, where, after speak-

ing a moment to Jack, I left him. I found Burns and most of the company in the room with the dead body; to my surprise the corpse was dressed in a coarse shroud, and already placed in a rough coffin, all of which the family of Burns had been charged to have done by the time of our return. Burns had removed the flat lid of the coffin to show the face of the corpse to our companions from the squire's, and was descanting on the strong expression of villany which he swore was marked in every feature and wrinkle, even then in death. After every one had satisfied his curiosity in looking at the corpse, Burns directed the carpenter who had made the coffin to nail down the top, when some one suggested that perhaps Ball would not be satisfied without seeing it himself; Burns did not see the sense of the thing, but at length yielded to the proposal, and Ball was called in. He entered the room with an extreme wildness of countenance, and approached the coffin slowly and timidly; he gazed intently for some moments in his dead enemy's face, and then, without saying a word, marched directly out of the room to the other part of the house.

Burns had had everything ready for the interment of Hinkle's body attended to; the

grave was dug under some trees in a corner of one of his fields, and a sort of rude bier was prepared to carry the body to the place. Five or six of the company removed the coffin in their hands, from the room to the road where it was placed on the bier. Much to my surprise, everything was conducted in the most orderly and respectful manner; nothing, indeed, was neglected that usually was observed in their simple funeral processions; we marched two and two after the coffin, and in more silence and reserve than are generally observed on such occasions in more refined communities. Many of those in the procession took their turns in carrying the coffin to the grave; for, although our way was smooth and shady, yet the day was warm, and the body very heavy.

Just as we had lowered the coffin into its place, and two persons had taken up spades to fill up the grave, to the utter astonishment of every one present, Ball suddenly sprang on the top of the fence near us. His mind was evidently deranged. "What are you a doin'?" he demanded roughly.

"Filling up the grave," said Burns.

"A'n none o' you said nothin' over him; I know'd that 'ould be, an' I'll say somethin myself; he shan't be buried like a dumb brute."

"To be sure," said one of the company, "it's proper for somebody to say something over the corpse; and Mr. Burns, I think, is the fittenist person here to do it."

"Where's preacher Waller?" asked Ball, wildly; "who went for preacher Waller?"

"Nonsense, Peter," thundered forth Burns, "if it'll satisfy you, I'll preach over him, and that will do just as well as preacher Waller's long whinings. Friends," continued Burns, pulling off his hat, in which he was imitated by all present, "friends, we've put in the grave a fellow creature, and we are just going to cover him with mother earth, for him to sleep till God wills him to wake up; it's beyond doubt our duty to forget his bad doings at such a time, and only to think a being like ourselves has ended his miserable life. I hope God will have mercy on his soul, for it needs it, I can solemnly tell you; but it is'nt for us to judge a fellow creature, let him be ever so bad, at such a time. I say, friends, let us hope God will show mercy to the soul of the body that lies here in this coffin; for I can tell you one thing, a bigger scoundrel never walked on this earth, that's my gospel say of him. But, for all, it's beyond doubt our duty to hope God will have mercy on his soul. Amen.

"Now, boys," he continued, clapping his hat on his head, "let's finish our work and be off."

While others were filling up the grave, Burns and I crossed the fence and persuaded Ball to return home immediately with me, Burns promising to remain until everything was properly arranged about the ground. As we walked back to his house, I was satisfied that the old man's mind was under considerable derangement; a circumstance that gave me excessive pain; for, although it had not been twenty-four hours since our first meeting, yet I felt an identification with him, and, indeed, a sort of attachment to him that I could not well account for. We had not got far on our way before we met his daughter searching for him; the poor girl looked almost as wild as her father; she told him that "Jack wanted him." Two or three times he expressed his determination to return to the grave, but his daughter's entreaties soon induced him to proceed on home. Shortly after our arrival at the house, the whole company from the grave reached there; Burns hurried them away as soon as possible, and even sent home all his family except his son. Burns joined me in the yard for a consultation; he was extremely

discomposed at the state of mind in which his friend now evidently was, and, for the first time, he seemed somewhat embarrassed. At last we agreed to despatch young Burns for medicine, and he soon returned with a vial of calomel, and another of laudanum; for the first article, an immense dose was immediately administered; the giving of the laudanum was postponed, by the advice of Ball's wife, until night. Burns continued in attendance on his friend, while I sought, in the room lately occupied by Hinkle's body, a few hours' repose, which I greatly needed. About two o'clock in the day Ball awoke; his mind was comparatively composed, and, to the extreme delight of his wife and daughter, he took some nourishment. I shall never forget the appearance of joy which those two simple-minded women manifested while they held his repast before him, and served him as he ate it. My horse now stood hitched in the fence, and I went in to take my leave of Ball. "Farewell, friend Ball," said I to the old man, stretching out my hand to him.

"You're goin', then, stranger?" said he.

"Yes; I am sorry I cannot spend a few days with you, but I must go on now as fast as I can."

"I'm sincere sorry, too, you can't stay, an' I'm a great deal more sorry at——"

"Oh, never mind that," said I, shaking his rough hand, which still clasped mine.

"Well, stranger, you're a man, an' Peter Ball's roof's you'rn, and he'll always be real happy—the same as though you're his own blood—to see you eatin' alongside of him; and I hope that'll happen many a time, ef God spares us."

"I trust so too," said I, shaking his hand for the last time.

"Well, God bless you," said the old man, with an emotion that made me hasten away to bid Jack farewell, who clasped my hand tightly, but did not utter a syllable. In the passage I took my leave of the mother and daughter, the former saying, "But, stranger, you didn't tell Peter when you thought you'd be this way agin." Upon informing her that I hoped to see them in a few weeks, she absolutely smiled with delight,—no doubt, at the idea of the gratification her husband would derive from it. Burns walked out to the fence with me, accompanied by two neighbours who had just arrived. As I shook Burns' hand, he said—

"Well, stranger, I can tell you one

thing, I know you; do you know Harry Burns?"

"Yes," I answered, "well."

"You know where he lives?" he continued.

"Yes."

A hearty additional shake of hands, and a mutual *good-bye* closed our parting, and I spurred my horse on his road.

About three weeks after my departure spoken of above, in returning on my journey, I found myself again at Ball's house. He had perfectly recovered from his slight derangement of mind; but, as his wife had anticipated, he was still gloomy, and spent much of his time in solitary rambles with his gun and dogs.

XVI.

ABOVE WORK, BUT NOT BEYOND WANT.

THOSE who never work—those who number among their most precious privileges a complete exemption from not only the spur of necessity, but the pressure of duty—must find it hard to believe that there are people in the world whose destiny it seems to be to work all the time. Yet no—these are the very beings who think God has so ordered the lot of a portion of his children, in contrast to the all-embracing beneficence of his providence in other respects. These might be called the butterflies of the earth, if the butterfly was not an established emblem of *soul.* Their self-complacency is much soothed by the conviction that they are of "the porcelain clay of human kind," and they are thankful—or rather glad that there *is* a

coarser race, to whom hard work and hard fare are well suited.

The fate of these two divisions of mankind is, after all, much more justly balanced than either portion is apt to imagine. There is a universal necessity for labour, and those who obstinately close their understandings against this fact, whether rich or poor, inevitably join the class of sufferers sooner or later. There is nothing in which what we call *fate* is more impartial. The poor are admonished by destitution, and the rich by ill health; the mere idler by ennui, and the scheming sharper by disappointment and disgrace. Yet this same universal necessity is not more evident than is the undying effort to elude it. After centuries of warning, the struggle still continues; its energy sustained sometimes by pride, sometimes by a downright love of ease, so blind that it looks no farther than the present moment. Thus much of the outer and obvious world—a theatre whose actors, from being, or supposing themselves to be, "the observed of all observers," have fallen into many unnatural views and artificial habits of life, all tending to one darling end of drawing a broad line of distinction between themselves and the "common" and the "vulgar."

In these western wilds, where nature, scarce redeemed from primeval barbarism, seems to demand, with an especial earnestness, the best aid of her denizens, and where she pays with gold every drop that falls on her bosom from the brow of labour, there may be danger sometimes methinks, danger of falling into an error of an opposite character. There is so much work to be done, and so few people to do it, that the idea of labour is apt to absorb the entire area of the mind, to the exclusion of some other ideas not only useful but pleasant withal, and humanizing, and softening, and calculated to cherish the higher attributes of our nature. So far is this carried that idleness is emphatically *the* vice for which public opinion reserves its severest frown, and in whose behalf no voice ventures an apologetic word. If a man drink, he may reform; even if he should steal, we permit him to rebuild his character upon repentance; but if he be lazy, we have neither hope nor charity.

Still, even among us, there are those to whose imagination the *dolce far niente* is irresistible; and it must be confessed that they form a class which is not likely to raise the reputation of the followers of pleasure. They have one thing in common with the fashion-

ables of the earth—a determination to eschew every conceivable form of labour; but, however dignified this trait may appear when set off by an imposing *hauteur* and an elegant costume, it makes but a sorry figure in the woods, where the prevailing tone is far different. Yet these kindred souls are as incorrigible as their betters; and like them will often perform as much labour, and exert as much ingenuity in avoiding work, as would, if differently directed, suffice to place them in an independent and honourable position.

It must be owned that this land of hard work presents a thousand temptations to idleness. Not to mention the sacrifice with which we begin—the giving up of all that gave life a rosy or a golden tint in the older world—there may be other excuses for a longing after amusement, in minds of a certain class. There is an aspect of severe effort grinding care in the general—of closeness—of constitution of society; the natural consequence of the fact that poverty, or at least narrow circumstances at home, was the impetus that drove nine-tenths of the population westward; and this aspect being in striking opposition to the free, glowing, and abundant one which characterizes unworn nature in this scarcer trodden region,

suggests and connects with labour a certain idea of slavery—of confinement; and creates a proportionate desire for all the liberty that so narrow a fate will permit. He who possesses abundant leisure for amusement, will perhaps be heard to complain that it is hard to find; but he who is every hour spurred on by necessity to the most toilsome employments, cannot but snatch with delight every available form of recreation; and will be apt to devote to the coveted indulgence hours which must be dearly purchased by the sufferings of the future. Let us judge him with a charity which we may hardly be disposed to exercise towards his prototype in high places.

So unpopular, as we have said, so contrary to the prevailing spirit, is this desire for amusement, that those among us who are so unfortunate as to be born with something of a poetical temperament—which delights in quiet musings, long rambles in the woods, and other forms of idleness—generally disguise to themselves and try to disguise to others the true nature of this propensity, by contriving many new and ingenious ways of earning money, though all agreeing in one point—a determined avoidance of everything that is usually called *work*.

In the early spring time, while a thin covering of very fragile ice still encrusts the marshes, there may be seen around their borders a tangled fringe of seemingly bare bushes. On nearer approach, these bushes are found stripped indeed as to their upper branches, but garnished at the water's edge with berries of the brightest coral, each shrined separately in a little ring of crystal. These are the most delicate and highly prized cranberries; mellowed, not wilted, by the severest frosts, and now peeping through their icy veil, and glowing in the first warm rays of approaching spring.

These are an irresistible temptation to our fashionable of the woods. Armed in boots, not seven-leagued, but thick as the seven-fold shield of Ajax, he plunges into the crackling pool; and there, as long as a berry is to be found, he stands or wades; snatching perhaps a shilling's worth of cranberries, and a six months' rheumatism. No matter, this is not *work*.

You may see him next, if you are an early riser, setting off, at peep of dawn, on a fishing expedition. He winds through the dreary woods, yawning portentously, and stretching as if he were emulous of the height of the hickory trees. Dexterously

swaying his long rod, he follows the little stream until it is lost in the bosom of the woodland lake; if unsuccessful from the bank, he seeks the frail skiff, which is the common property of laborious idlers like himself, and, pushing off shore, sits dreaming under the sun's sweltering beams, until he has secured a supply for the day. Home again—an irregular meal at any time of day—and he goes to bed with the ague; but he murmurs not, for fishing is not *work.*

Here is a strawberry field—well may it claim the name! It is a wide fallow which has been ploughed late in the last autumn, and is now lying in ridges to court the fertilizing sunbeams. It is already clothed, though scantily, with a luxuriant growth of fresh verdure, and among and through and over all glows the rich crimson of the field strawberry—the ruby-crowned queen of all wild fruits. Here—and who can blame him? —will our exquisite, with wife and children, if he be the fortunate proprietor of so many fingers, spend the long June day; eating as many berries as possible, and amassing in leafy baskets the rich remainder, to be sold to the happy holders of splendid shillings, or to dry in the burning sun for next winter's "tea-saase." Ploughing would be more pro-

fitable, certainly, but not half so pleasant, for ploughing is *work.*

Then come the whortleberries; not the little, stunted, seedy things that grow on dry uplands and sandy commons; but the produce of towering bushes in the plashy meadow; generous, pulpy berries, covered with a fine bloom; the "blae-berry" of Scotland; a delicious fruit, though of humble reputation, and, it must be confessed, somewhat enhanced in value by the scarcity of the more refined productions of the garden. We scorn thee not, oh! bloom-covered neighbour; but gladly buy whole bushels of thy prolific family from the lounging Indian, or the still lazier white man. We must not condemn the gatherers of whortleberries, but it is a melancholy truth that they do not get rich.

Wild plums follow closely in the wake of whortleberries, and these are usually picked when they are so sour and bitter as to be totally uneatable; because the rush for them is so great, among the class alluded to, that each thinks nobody else will wait for them to ripen; and whoever succeeds in stripping all the trees in his neighbourhood, even though he can neither use or sell a particle of his treasure, deems himself the fortunate

man. This seem ridiculous, truly; but is it not exactly the spirit of the miser? What matters whether the thing be gold or green plums, if they are really useless? This blind haste to secure anything bearing the form of fruit, is only an extreme exemplification of the desire to snatch a precarious subsistence from the lap of Nature, instead of paying the price which she ever demands for a due and full enjoyment of all her bounties.

Baiting for wild bees beguiles the busy shunner of work into many a wearisome tramp, many a night-watch, and many a lost day. This is a most fascinating chase, and sometimes excites the very spirit of gambling. The stake seems so small in comparison with the possible prize—and gamblers and honey-seekers think all possible things probable—that some, who are scarcely ever tempted from regular business by any other disguise of idleness, cannot withstand a bee-hunt. A man whose arms and axe are all-sufficient to insure a comfortable livelihood for himself and family, is chopping, perhaps, in a thick wood, where the voices of the locust, the cricket, the grasshopper, and the wild bee, with their kindred, are the only sounds that reach his ear from sunrise till sunset. He feels lonely and listless; and,

as noon draws on, he ceases from his hot toil, and, seating himself on the tree which has just fallen beneath his axe, he takes out his lunch of bread-and-butter, and, musing as he eats, thinks how hard his life is, and how much better it must be to have bread-and-butter without working for it. His eye wonders through the thick forest, and follows, with a feeling of envy, the winged inhabitants of the trees and flowers, till at length he notes among the singing throng some half dozen of bees.

The lunch is soon despatched; a honey tree must be near; and the chopper spends the remainder of the daylight in endeavouring to discover it. But the cunning insects scent the human robber, and will not approach their home until nightfall. So our weary wight plods homeward, laying plans for their destruction.

The next morning's sun, as he peers above the horizon, finds the bee-hunter burning honey-comb and old honey near the scene of yesterday's inkling. Stealthily does he watch his line of bait, and cautiously does he wait until the first glutton that finds himself sated with the luscious feast sets off in a "bee-line"—"like arrow darting from the bow"—blind betrayer of his home, like the

human inebriate. This is enough. The spoiler asks no more; and the first moonlight night sees the rich hoard transferred to his cottage; where it sometimes serves, almost unaided, as food for the whole family, until the last drop is consumed. One hundred and fifty pounds of honey are sometimes found in a single tree, and it must be owned the temptation is great; but the luxury is generally dearly purchased, if the whole cost and consequences be counted. To be content with what supplies the wants of the body for the present moment, is, after all, the characteristic rather of the brute than of the man; and a family accustomed to this view of life will grow more and more idle and thriftless, until poverty and filth and even beggary lose all their terrors. It is almost proverbial among farmers that bee-hunters are always behindhand.

Wild grapes must be left until after the hard frosts have mellowed their pulp; and the gathering of them is not a work of much cost of time or labour, since the whole vine is taken down at once, and rifled in a few moments; its bounteous clusters being reserved for the ignoble death of a protracted withering, as they hang on strings from the smoky rafters of the log-house.

Hazel-nuts are not very abundant, and they must therefore—so think our wiseacres—be pulled before they are fit for anything, lest somebody else should have the benefit of them. So we seldom see a full-ripe hazel-nut. I have had desperate thoughts of transplanting a hazel-bush or two; but I am assured it would only be buying Punchinello. Its powers are gone when it leaves its proper place.

Hickory-nuts afford a most encouraging resource. They are so plentiful in some seasons that one might almost live on them; and then the gathering of them is such famous pastime! An occasional risk of life and limb, to be sure, but no *work!*

Hunting the deer, in forests which seem to have been planted to shelter him, and in which he is seldom far to seek, is a sort of middle term—a something *between* play and work—which is not very severely censured even by our utilitarians. Venison is not "meat," to be sure, in our parlance; for we reserve that term for pork, *par excellence;* but venison has some solid value, and may be salted and smoked, which seems to place it among the articles of household thrift. But our better farmers, though they may see deer-tracks in every direction round the

scene of their daily rail-splitting, seldom hunt, unless in some degree debilitated by sickness, or from some other cause incapacitated for their usual daily course of downright, regular industry. "It is cheaper to buy venison of the Indians," say they; and now that the Indians are all gone, there are white Indians enough — white skins with Indian tastes and habits under them — to make hunting a business of questionable respectability. Ere long it will be left in the hands of such, with an occasional exception in favour of city gentlemen who wander into the wilds with the hope of rebracing enervated frames by some form of exercise which is not *work*.

XVII.

SAVAGE MEN AND SAVAGE BEASTS.

THE sun was just sinking behind the blue nountains, when we came to a small stream —a tributary of Snake river—that took its levious course through a valley between two precipitous ridges, and thence through a canon of a thousand feet in depth. The valley was shaded by large trees of various kinds, and was romantic in its appearance. It contained good grazing also, and good water, and this made it a desirable camp-ground. Hobbling our horses and setting them free, we kindled a fire, around which we squatted to cook our meat, smoke our pipes, and fill up the intervals with the most amusing subjects, among which Teddy and his "divil's taepot" came in for their full quota of mirthful comment.

At length we began to grow drowsy, and

having seen our animals tethered within the circle of the fire, and it being Pierre's turn to stand guard, Teddy and I threw ourselves upon the ground, our blankets rolled around us, and soon were fast asleep. For an hour or two every thing passed off quietly, when Pierre awoke me with a gentle shake.

"Ver sorre, monsieur, to—vot you call him—deesturb you, eh?—but de tam Injen—sacre le diable!"

"Well," said I, starting up, "what is it? Are we attacked?" and at the same time I woke Teddy.

"By gar!" returned the Frenchman, "I see von leetle—vot you call him—sneaker, eh?—Him creep—creep—creep—and I tink I wake you, sare, and soot him, by tam!"

"Faith, that's it!" cried Teddy, grasping his rifle and springing to his feet; "That's it, now! Soot the haathen!"

By this time I was fully aroused to the sense of danger; and quickly learning from Pierre where he had seen the savage, I grasped my rifle and sprang beyond the fire-light, in an opposite direction, followed by my companions. We had not gained ten paces, when crack, crack, went some five or six muskets, the balls of which, whizzing over our heads, did not tend to lessen our speed.

However, we reached the covert unharmed, and for the time considered ourselves safe. We turned to reconnoitre, but not a sign of living thing could we see save our horses, which stood with ears erect, trembling and snorting, as if conscious of a hidden foe.

For an hour we remained in this manner, when, concluding the enemy had departed, I proposed returning to the fire.

"Hist!" whispered Pierre, grasping my arm. "You shall see, monsieur."

And he was right; for not ten minutes afterwards, he silently directed my attention to some dark objects lying flat upon the ground, which, with all my experience and penetration, I could not believe were savages, until I perceived them gradually near our horses. Then I became alarmed, lest reaching them, they might speedily mount and escape, leaving us to make the best of a perilous and toilsome journey on foot.

"What is to be done, Pierre? I fear we are in a bad fix."

"Je me couche—je tire fur lui. I lie down, sare—I soot at him. You sal see. Wait von leetle minneet. Ven you hears my canon, den you soot and run at him as le diable."

Saying this, Pierre glided away as noise-

lessly as an Indian, and I saw nothing more of him for several minutes. Meantime, Teddy and I kept our eyes intently fixed upon our stealthy foes, and our rifles in rest, ready to give them their deadly contents at a moment's warning. Slowly, like a cat creeping upon her game, did these half-naked Indians, serpent-like, steal towards our animals, every moment lessening the distance between them and the objects of their desires. I began to grow nervous. What had become of Pierre! If he intended to do any thing, now I thought was the time. A few moments and it would be too late; and acting upon this thought, I drew a bead upon the most advanced savage, and was about pulling the trigger, when the latter suddenly bounded to his feet, uttered a yell of delight, and sprang towards the now frightened animals, imitated in his manœuvre by some ten or twelve others.

"Good Heaven! all is lost!" I exclaimed, bitterly.

The words had scarcely passed my lips, when bang went a pistol from among the horses; and the foremost savage—the one I had singled out, and who was on the point of grasping one of the tether ropes—bounded up into the air, with a horrible yell, and fell

back a corpse. This was wholly unlooked for by his companions, and checked for an instant those pressing on behind. Remembering Pierre's request, I whispered Teddy to "throw" his man and charge. Both our rifles spoke together, and down tumbled two more. At the same moment Pierre's rifle sent another to his account; and simultaneously springing forward, all three of us made the welkin ring with our shouts of joy and defiance. This was the grand *coup de grace* of the night. The Indians were alarmed and bewildered. They had counted on certain success in stealing our horses without the loss of a man. Four had fallen in as many seconds; and fancying themselves in an ambuscade, they turned, with wild yells of affright, and disappeared in every direction; so that by the time I had joined Pierre, we were masters of the field, and not an unwounded foe in sight.

"You see hoss safe, monsieur," said Pierre, hurriedly, as we met; "and I see to tam Injen, eh!" and, without waiting a reply, he darted forward, and the next moment was engaged in tearing off the bloody scalps of the slain.

As every mountaineer considers this his prerogative, I did not interfere, but, order-

ing Teddy to assist me, cut the lariats and led our horses back into the darkness, from fear of another attack, in which we might come out second best. In a few minutes Pierre approached me leisurely, and laughingly said—

"Tout va bien: All pe vell, sare;" and he held up to the light four bloody scalps. "Von, two, tree, not pe dead, I kill him. Good for—vot you call him—stealer, eh?—ha, ha, ha!" and, taking out his box, he deliberately proceeded to take snuff with his bloody fingers, adding, by way of accompaniment, "Von tam ver moche exsallant joke him—ha, ha, ha! Sacre! me tink him get von leetle tam—vot you call him—astonishment, eh? By gar! ver moche good."

As we did not consider it prudent to venture again within the fire-light, we decided to remain where we were through the night, and guard against surprise. All was dark around us, except in the direction of the roaring fire, which, flickering to the passing breeze, made the scene of our late encampment look dismal enough. To add to its gloom and cheerlessness, we were presently greeted with the distant howl of a hungry pack of wolves. Every moment these howls grew louder, showing the animals were ap-

proaching the spot, while our horses snorted and became so restless we could scarcely hold them. Nearer and nearer came the hungry beasts of prey, till at length we could perceive their fiery eyeballs, and occasionally catch a glimpse of their bodies, as they hovered around the circle of the fire, fearing to approach the carcasses they so much coveted.

For an hour or two they prowled and howled around us, "making night hideous with their orgies," while the fire, gradually growing less and less bright, increased their boldness accordingly.

At last one, unable to longer bear the keen pangs of hunger, leaped forward and buried his teeth and claws in the carcass of one of our late foes. The others followed his example, and in less than a minute as many as fifty of these ravenous animals were growling, fighting, gnashing their teeth, and tearing the flesh from the bones of the dead Indians.

Pierre now informed me we were in imminent danger of being attacked ourselves, as, having once tasted blood, and their appetites being rather sharpened than appeased, they would only become more bold in consequence. To my inquiry as to what should

be done, he replied that we must continue to kill one of their number as fast as he might be devoured by his companions; and, setting the example, he shot one forthwith. Sure enough! no sooner had the beast fallen, than the rest sprang upon and devoured him. By that time my rifle was loaded, and I knocked over another, which met the same fate. In this manner we kept firing alternately for a couple of hours, during which time the old stock was replenished by new comers, until I began to fancy all of the genus would be present before daylight. But at last one after another got satisfied, and slunk away licking his chops. No new ones appeared, and, ere the stars grew dim, nothing was visible of the last night's butchery but a collection of clean-licked, shiny bones. While the fire lasted, we could see to take sight; but after that went out, we fired at random; though, knowing the exact location of the beasts, our shots generally proved successful in killing or wounding.

When morning again put a smiling face upon the recent sable earth, we mounted our horses and quitted the loathsome spot, thanking God for our providential deliverance.

XVIII.

ESTABLISHING THE SCIENCE.

THE persecutions of the Mesmerists will one day make a curious volume, for they will be written, of course. The disciples of Galileo, Harvey, Jenner, &c., have been exalted in their struggles and sufferings, and those of Mesmer even more brightly will shine in martyrology. Seriously, the trials to which travelling Mesmerists are put, are, at times, humiliating and painful enough, albeit they afford infinite sport to the unbelievers. These travelling "professors," or many of them, are charlatans, thus far, that they pretend to treat, *scientifically*, phenomena, the real nature of which they are entirely ignorant of; and the study of which they are, neither by education, habit, or *aim*, at all fitted for. They are charlatans, in that their superficial knowledge of mere *effects* is

simply made available in the shape of *exhibition;* and the success of the *show* being their first object, they may be suspected, perhaps, in some cases, of a little *management.* At the same time, the vulgar idea of general collusion, which prevails among those who *will* not themselves experiment, would be ridiculous if it were not pitiable.

De Bonneville had been electrifying Detroit by his more than *galvanic* effects upon the muscles of scores of his *impressibles*, when an enormous-sized Wolverine "trying the thing" himself, found that he was quite equal to the professor, in setting folks to sleep and "makin' on 'em cut up" afterwards, and, accordingly, in the *furore* of his discovery, off he went into the country to lecture and diffuse the new light which had been dispensed to him. His success was tremendous; town and village said there was "something in it," until his reputation, as in other cases, begat him enemies. The Wolverine Mesmerizer, after astonishing a "hall" full one evening, at some very "promising town" or other, and which bade fair shortly to be quite "a place," returned to the tavern, to be arrested in the bar-room by a score of "first citizens," who had then and there congregated "jest to test the humbug," any how!

"Good ev*ening*, perfesser," said one. "Won't you take a little of the *fluid?*" said another; and this being an evident hit in the way of a *joke*, the "anti-humbugs" proceeded to more serious business.

"Perfesser," said the principal speaker, a giant of a fellow,—before whose proportions even the huge magnetiser looked small. "Perfesser," said he, "a few on us here hev jest concluded to hev you try an experiment, appintin' ourselves a reg'lar constituted committee to *re*port!"

The professor begged to appoint a more proper place and hour, &c., or, according to the apprehensions of "the crowd," evinced the expected desire to make "a clean back out."

"Perfesser," resumed the "big dog," "ef we ondustand right, you call your Mesmer *ism* a 're-*mee*-jil agent,' which means, I s'pose, that it cures things?"

The disciple of science referred to divers cases about town in which he had been successful, to say nothing of the "pulling teeth" operation which he had just concluded his lecture with.

"Yes," said the challenger, "you're death on teeth we know, but ken Mesmerism come the re-*mee*-jil over rheumatiz?"

"Inflammatory or chronic?" demanded the professor.

"Wa'll, stranger, we ain't much given to doctor's bottle names, but we reckon it's about the wust kind."

The Mesmerist was about to define the difference between inflammatory attacks and *local* affections, when he was interrupted by the inquisitor, who *rather allowed* that as far as the *location* of the disorder went, it had a pre-emption right to the hull crittur; and that, furthermore, it was jest expected of him that he should forthwith visit the case, and bid him take up his bed and walk, or he himself would be escorted out of town, astride of a rail, with the accompanying ceremonies. This was a dilemma, either horn of which promised a toss to his reputation, but the crowd were solemnly in earnest; already triumphing in his *detection*, they began to look wolfish at him and wise at each other, so that the Wolverine had nothing left for it but to demand boldly to "see the patient!" We had better give the rest of the story as it was related to a humorous friend of ours by the disciple of Mesmer himself.

"Up stars I went with 'em, mad as thunder, I tell you; first at being thought a humbug, and next, that my individooal share

of the American eagle should be compelled into a measure by thunder. I'd agin them a fight, if it hadn't ben for the *science*, which would a suffered anyhow, so I jest said to myself, let 'em bring on their rheumatiz! I felt as if I could a mesmerized a horse, and I *de*termined what*ever* the case might be, I'd make it squeal, by thunder!

"'Here he is,' said they, and in we all bundled into a room, gathering round a bed, with me shut in among 'em, and the cussed big onenlightened heathen that did the talking drawing out an almighty bowie-knife at the same time. 'That's your man!' said he. Well, there lay a miserable-looking critter, with his eyes sot and his mouth open,—and his jaws got wider and wider as he saw the crowd and the bowie-knife, I tell you! 'That's the idea!' said old big Ingin.

"'Rise up in that bed!' said I, and I tell you what, I must a looked at him dreadful, for up he jumped on eend, as if he'd jest got a streak of galvanic.

"'Git out on this floor,' said I, with a wuss look, and I wish I may be shot if out he didn't come, lookin' wild, I tell ye!

"'*Now cut dirt, drot you!*' screamed I, and Jehu Gineral Jackson!—if he didn't make a straight shirt-tail for the door, may I

never make another pass. After him I went, and after me they cum, and *pre*haps there wasn't the orfullest stampede down three pair of stars that ever occurred in Michigan! Down cut old rheumatiz through the bar-room—out I cut after him—over went the stove in the rush after both on us. I chased him round two squars—in the snow at that—then headed him off, and chased him back to hotel agin, where he landed in a *fine sweat*, begged for his life, and said—*he'd give up the property!* Well, I wish I may be shot if he wasn't a feller that they were offerin' a reward for in Buffalo! I made him dress himself—cured of his rheumatiz—run it right out of him; delivered him up, pocketed the reward, and *established the science*, by thunder!"

XX.

MAN VERSUS HORSE.

A FEW days ago a match was made for Mr. G. B. to run two hundred yards, on a road that he should select, for a hundred dollars a side, against Mr. J. H. W.'s grey mare; both man and beast were known to be pretty *fast*, particularly the biped; however the owner of the quadruped was not *slow* in backing his mare to win, swearing she *could* and *would* beat anything living in this "mortal world."

The eventful day having arrived, early in the morning was met in Brooklyn Tom M., in charge of the mare on her way to Gowanus, where it was understood the match should come off, and a little later on were seen travelling, in the same direction, the biped and his friends, who were going to take all the gumption out of the gallant grey.

Saying which, he took a line and measured twenty yards from the trunk of the tree, on each side, and says—

"Now, old fellow, mount your grey, and let's begin."

"Where's the ground?" says Tom M.

"Where's the ground?" says the biped, "why here, on a fair turnpike road. I'm a going to run your mare two hundred yards, just round this tree, and you don't find this child run on any other track."

Nuff said—the owner of the grey looked unutterables, and, with the mare and rider, made immediate tracks for the Empire City. Not so the biped—he and his friends, thankful for having "got out of the hole," stayed on the island a few days, on the spree, until they thought the choler of the owner of the quadruped would have time to evaporate.

XXI.

TIMBER JAMS, AND RUNNING THE WANGUN.

In the language of lumbermen, brook-drives are usually distinct parcels of logs belonging to an individual or company. These various parcels are often thrown together in one mass on the ample current of the main river, to the number of twelve or thirteen thousand pieces; in which case the different crews unite and make common cause. As the water rises suddenly, and falls as rapidly on the river, by which, in the first instance, many logs run upon intervale and meadow land, or upon high rocks and ledges, and, in the other case, from the rapid decline of water, there is necessarily much activity called for to clear such logs from the position in which they are placed, else they must be left behind, or require great physical exertion to disengage and bring them on with the rest.

A steady current or pitch of water is preferable to one either rising or diminishing, as, when rising rapidly, the water at the middle of the river is considerably higher than at the shores—so much so as to be distinctly perceived by the eye of a spectator on the banks, presenting an appearance like a turnpike road. The lumber, therefore, is always sure to incline from the centre of the channel towards either shore. On the falls, and the more difficult portions of the river, sometimes immense jams form. In the commencement, some unlucky log swings across the narrow chasm, striking some protruding portions of the ledge, and stops fast; others come on, and, meeting this obstruction, stick fast also, until thousands upon thousands form one dense breast-work, against and through which a boiling, leaping river rushes with terrible force. Who that is unaccustomed to such scenes, on viewing that pile of massive logs, now densely packed, cross-piled, and interwoven in every conceivable position in a deep chasm with overhanging cliffs, with a mighty column of rushing water, which, like the heavy pressure upon an arch, confines the whole more closely, would decide otherwise than that the mass must lie in its present position, either to decay or be moved

by some extraordinary convulsion. Tens of thousands of dollars' worth lie in this wild and unpromising position. The property involved, together with the exploits of daring and feats of skill to be performed in breaking that "jam," invest the whole with a degree of interest not common to the ordinary pursuits of life, and but little realized by many who are even familiar with the terms *lumber* and *river-driving*. In some cases many obstructing logs are to be removed singly. Days and weeks sometimes are thus expended before the channel is cleared. In other cases a single point only is to be touched, and the whole jam is in motion. To hit upon the most vulnerable point is the first object; the best means of effecting it next claim attention; then the consummation brings into requisition all the physical force, activity, and courage of the men, more especially those engaged at the dangerous points.

From the neighbouring precipice, overhanging the scene of operation, a man is suspended by a rope round his body, and lowered near to the spot where a breach is to be made, which is always selected at the lower edge of the jam. The point may be treacherous, and yield to a feeble touch, or it may require much strength to move it. In

the latter case, the operator fastens a long rope to a log, the end of which is taken down stream by a portion of the crew, who are to give a long pull and strong pull when all is ready. He then commences prying while they are pulling. If the jam starts, or any part of it, or if there be even an indication of its starting, he is drawn suddenly up by those stationed above; and, in their excitement and apprehensions for his safety, this is frequently done with such haste as to subject him to bruises and scratches upon the sharp-pointed ledges or bushes in the way. It may be thought best to cut off the key-log, or that which appears to be the principal barrier. Accordingly, he is let down on to the jam, and as the place to be operated upon may in some cases be a little removed from the shore, he either walks to the place with the rope attached to his body, or, untying it, leaves it where he can readily grasp it in time to be drawn from his perilous position. Often, where the pressure is direct, a few blows only are given with the axe, when the log snaps in an instant with a loud report, followed suddenly by the violent motion of the "jam;" and, ere our bold river-driver is jerked half-way to the top of the cliff, scores of logs, in wildest confusion,

rush beneath his feet, while he yet dangles in air, above the rushing, tumbling mass. If that rope, on which life and hope hang suspended, should part, worn by the sharp point of some jutting rock, death, certain and quick, would be inevitable.

The deafening noise when such a jam breaks, produced by the concussion of moving logs whirled about like mere straws, the crash and breaking of some of the largest, which part apparently as easily as a reed is severed, together with the roar of waters, may be heard for miles; and nothing can exceed the enthusiasm of the river-drivers on such occasions, jumping, hurraing, and yelling with joyous excitement.

Such places and scenes as are thus sketched may be found and witnessed on most rivers where lumber is driven. Referring to an item of experience on a drive down the Mattawamkeag, says a logger, "Our drive consisted of about thirteen thousand pieces, with a crew of thirty-two men, all vigorous and in the prime of life. Out of such a number, exposed as we were to the perils attendant upon the business, it was a question which we sometimes inwardly pondered, Who of our party may conclude the scenes of mortal life on this drive?

"We commenced about the 25th of March to drive, while snow, and ice, and cold weather, were yet in the ascendant. The logs were cleared from the lake and stream of Baskahegan in fifty days, which brought us into the Mattawamkeag. Twelve miles down this river, below the junction of Baskahegan, we came to Slugundy Falls. There the water passes through a gorge about fifty feet wide, with a ledge on either side, making a tremendous plunge, and in immediate proximity a very large rock stands a little detached from its ledgy banks. There the whole body of our logs formed an immense jam, and such a mass of confusion as then presented itself beggars description. Logs of every size were interwoven and tangled together like heaps of straw in 'winnow,' while the water rushed through and over them with a power which seemed equal to the upturning of the very ledges which bound it. We paused to survey the work before us, calculating the chances of success, of life and death. We knew the dangers attending the operation; that life had on former occasions been sacrificed there, and that the graves of the brave men who had fallen were not far distant; and we remembered that we too might make with them our

final resting-place. The work was, however, commenced; and after five days incessant application, mutually sharing the dangers incurred, we made a clean sweep of this immense jam without accident. A short distance below are Gordon Falls, at which place there is a contraction of the channel, with high ledges on either hand, a straight but rapid run, with a very rough bottom, at once difficult and dangerous to navigate or drive. Here logs to a greater or less extent always jam, the number varying according to the height of the freshet. This place we soon passed successfully. Logs, 'wangun' and all, were soon over, excepting one empty boat, which two brothers, our best men, in attempting to run, 'swamped' and capsized; in a moment they both mounted upon her bottom, and were swiftly passing along the dashing river, when the boat struck a hidden rock, and the foremost one plunged headlong into the boiling waves. Being an active man, and an expert swimmer, we expected to see him rise and struggle with the tide which bore them onward; but, to our amazement and sorrow, we saw no more of him until four days after, when his corpse was discovered some distance below the place of this sad accident. At the foot of the falls a small

jam of logs made out into the channel; several of the men ran out upon this to rescue the other, who had also lost his footing on the boat. He passed close to the jam under water, when one of the crew suddenly thrust his arm down and seized him by the hair of his head, and drew him to land. On recovering from the shock which he had sustained in his perilous passage, and learning that his brother was drowned, he blamed the crew for not permitting him to share the same fate, and attempted to plunge again into the river, but was restrained by force till reason once more resumed her sway. The body of the other received the humble attentions usual upon such interments, as soon as a coffin could be procured. Not two hours previous to this accident, this individual, taking one of the crew with him, visited the grave of a fellow-labourer near by; left the spot, launched his frail boat, and lay down the next hour in a river-driver's grave."

Fourteen days from this time we drove our logs to the boom, having passed a distance of only one hundred and thirty miles in ninety days.

The mode of living on these driving excursions is altogether "itinerant," and really comfortless, for the most part. A temporary

shelter where night overtakes them is a luxury not always enjoyed. Often nothing is above them but the forest's canopy, and beneath them the cold earth, it may be snow, with a slight bed of coarse boughs, over which a blanket is spread, and generally a large fire is kept burning through the night. Days and nights, without intermission, are often passed without a dry shred to the back. This is being "packed;" and, if not a "water cure," it is being water-soaked in earnest.

It would not be surprising if rheumatism were entailed upon the river-driver as a consequence of such exposure; yet I have known men to enjoy better health under these circumstances than under almost any other. As for instance, I have seen a man passing sleepless nights with asthma at home, now on the bed, then on the floor, or reclining on a chair, struggling for a free respiration, until his very eyes would start from their sockets. I have known such a man exchange his position for the exposures peculiar to log-driving, and never for once suffer from this distressing complaint during the whole campaign, but, on returning to the comforts of home, experience an immediate relapse.

From the foregoing account, which is

really believed to come short of the reality, the reader will be enabled to form some estimate of the dangers, hardships, and deaths, encountered by thousands in the lumbering operations—a business which is hardly supposed to possess any peculiarities of incident or adventure above the most common pursuits of life. How little are the generality of mankind disposed to consider as they should, that for much which contributes to their comfort and ease, many a hardship has been endured, and multitudes of individuals have been sacrificed!

The camping utensils for river-driving, with provisions, are moved along day by day, according to the progress made by the drive, so that for the most part each night presents a new location, with the usual preparations. The boats appropriated for the removal of the whole company, apparatus, and provisions, when loaded, are called "*wanguns*," an Indian word signifying bait, and, when thus appropriated, means bait or provision boats.

Among the dangers to be incurred, where both life and property are hazarded, is that of "running the wangun"—a phrase perfectly understood on the river, but which the uninitiated will better understand when I say that it means the act of taking these

loaded bateaux down river from station to station, particularly down quick water. This is a business generally committed to experienced watermen, especially when a dangerous place is to be passed, as to "swamp the wangun" is often attended with not only the loss of provisions and utensils, but also life. From this fact, the circumstance is always regarded with interest by all hands, who watch the navigators in their perilous passage with no ordinary or unnecessary solicitude.

On one occasion two active young men put off from the shore with the "wangun," to make the passage of some quick water just at the head of a fearful fall, where, as was customary, the whole party were to be carried by. In passing a rock, where the water formed a large whirlpool, the boat, on striking it, instantly capsized. One of the men, being an expert swimmer, told his comrade to take hold of the back of his vest, and he could swim with him to the shore; but the current carried them so swiftly towards the falls that it became necessary for the swimmer to disengage himself from his companion, who clung to him with a death-grasp. His efforts to effect a separation were unsuccessful, and every moment they were carried nearer to

the fatal falls. Suddenly sinking in the water, the swimmer contrived to turn round and face his drowning friend. Drawing up his legs, and bracing his feet against his companion, he gave a sudden and powerful kick, which disengaged him. Then rising to the surface, after this most painful act, to which he was impelled from dire necessity, he struck for the shore, and barely reached it in time to save himself from the sad fate that awaited his unfortunate associate, who, poor fellow, still clinging with a death-grasp to the shred of garment which was rent from his companion in the struggle, was carried over the falls, and then, passing under a jam of logs, floated down the river several miles, where his body was found, and interred on the banks of the Penobscot.

I have often passed the spot where he sleeps. The green grass waves in silence over his grave, and now the plough of the husbandman turns the greensward at his side, where once the forest trees majestically waved over his rude bier.

The following instance of the remarkable escape of a river-driver was related by one who witnessed the affair. I think it happened on the Androscoggin. Among the crew there and then engaged was a young

man who prided himself upon his fearlessness of danger; and, to maintain the character he thus arrogated to himself, would unnecessarily encounter perils which the prudent would shun. His frequent boastings rendered his society not a little unpleasant, at times, to the unpretending; and although this dislike was not so great as to lead them to rejoice in seeing him suffer, yet an event which might be likely to cool his courage would not have been unwelcome to the crew. On one occasion he ventured upon a jam of logs just above a rolling dam, over which the spring freshets poured one vast sheet of water, plunging several feet perpendicularly into a boiling caldron. The jam started so suddenly that he was precipitated with the logs over this fearful place, where not only the fall and under-tow threatened instant death, but the peril was imminent of being crushed by the tumbling logs. No one really expected to see him come out alive, but, to our surprise, he came up like a porpoise, and swam for the shore; but the swift current swept him down, and carried him under a jam of logs which formed below the dam. From previous exertion and exhaustion, we thought this must finish the poor fellow, and we really began to forget his faults, and

call to remembrance whatever of virtue he had manifested. Soon a dark object was seen to rise to the surface immediately below the jam. It was our hero, who, elevating his head and striking forward with his arms, swam with a buoyant stroke to a small island just below, where he landed in safety, having sustained no injury, and without having experienced any abatement of his former daring. Seemingly there was not one chance in a thousand for the life of a man making such a fearful voyage.

XXII.

SCENES IN ILLINOIS.

THIS state has a sort of heterogeneous population—a sort of pepper-and-salt mixture of all the races of mankind. The smoking, phlegmatic German, the Swede, the Norwegian, the beer-drinking Dutchman, the self-complacent John Bull, the canny Scot, the Israelite, the mercurial Frenchman, the frolicking Irishman, and the ever-present, ever-active, Yankee, together with the Buckeye from Ohio, the Hoosier from Indiana, and the generous Southerner—all are here in about equal proportions, and give about their equal quota to the character of the state, and supply a choice variety of their peculiar expressions in its language. The Hoosier "allows," the Southerner "suspicions," the Buckeye "reckons," while the Yankee "calculates," and the Missourian "opinions." The state has yet no settled character—its

different elements not having yet had time to harmonize and settle together. So its laws, its manners, and its languages.

The Yankee here is the same as the Yankee anywhere—only more so. More liberal, less saving, less religious, less honest, less careful of appearances—but quite as enterprising, and bound to get a living at his own or somebody's expense.

The Irishman is improved here—more intelligent, thrifty, and steady, and in every respect more of a man, and a better citizen, than he is elsewhere where I have seen him.

The Englishman gets good property here. He fares well, drinks his grog when he likes, and always alone, or with his own countrymen—keeps a pointer or setter, a double-barreled gun, and enjoys field sports when he pleases. A great many are scattered over the country, but do not readily assimilate with the people, and prefer brandy to corn whiskey—in which they show good taste.

The Scotchman here is always a good citizen, and a man of property, steady, thrifty, and law-abiding. The German and Jew do the fiddling and huckstering and gardening, wood-sawing, cooking, and a large part of the drinking. The only men I have seen drunk here were Germans, and yet they are

good citizens. The Swedes and Norwegians are steady, hard-working fellows, and give nobody any trouble.

The Hoosier is a sort of cross between the Southerner and the bear, with all his qualities, —mental, moral, and physical,—just about equally divided between the two races, with a touch of the wandering Arab. He is a wandering animal, and his home and house are wherever his wagon happens to be, near some timber or fence for firewood, and where there is water enough for coffee; whiskey he takes raw, and washing is to him and his a work of supererogation.

The young Sucker, the rising generation of all these heterogeneous materials, is the devil just as nearly as he is anything, unlettered, ignorant, uncivilized, self-dependent, free, lawless, unpolished, resolute, careless, confident, tobacco-chewing, whiskey-drinking, suspicious of good clothes or good manners in others, and finally, to use his own expression, "don't care '*shucks*' for law, gospel, or the devil." One general characteristic of the animal is, that he is always anticipating that somebody will "feel big," which he considers his duty to resent before it happens.

The way the young Sucker volunteer fought in Mexico may give you some idea of

his characteristics. He was there perfectly desperate in a fight. One of the officers related to me a little scene which occurred at Buena Vista, when the whole brunt of the Mexican advance was borne by an Illinois regiment. It seemed as though they would be annihilated by superiority of numbers, and there were some signs of wavering, when a young Sucker drew his rifle deliberately and dropped a Mexican. "*Set up the pins!*" he shouted, and the whole regiment took up the word, and at every fire would shout—"Set up the pins!" The officer said they fought like demons, and with as much drollery and fun as if on a spree. At another time when a charge was ordered, one of the officers could not think of the word, and he shouted, "Let 'er rip!" when the whole line burst out with the yell, "Let 'er rip!" and dashed in among the Mexicans, laughing and shouting the new battle-cry. Of course there are many honourable exceptions, but the characteristics of the young Sucker are mainly as I have represented. The state itself is yet but little over "twenty years of age," and was settled all in a heap. Poverty piled in the settlers very unceremoniously, and they had to struggle with all sorts of hardships and difficulties, sickness, priva-

tions, bereavements, and even dangers. So the youth were conceived, nursed, and brought up in a mixture of all sorts of exigencies, which makes them what they are.

Many curious and most laughable scenes are of daily occurrence in the courts of justice; I will relate one which occurred in Khane county, in the circuit court, a few years ago, when Gov. Ford was the presiding judge, which will serve as a specimen.

An old miner and land contractor of considerable wealth, was summoned as one of the grand jury. He came to court gloriously drunk and rather late—in fact, not until the court was organized, and was engaged in trying a case. He came staggering in, dressed in buckskin, and making his way to the bar, addressed the court and people with "How are ye, darn ye?" at the top of his voice.

The judge put on a decorous frown, and said, "Mr. Clerk, enter a fine of five dollars against Mr. ——."

"Wal, judge, I guess you think this old hoss han't got the money, but you're mistaken, old feller."

Judge—"Mr. Clerk, enter a fine of ten dollars."

"Wal, old feller, I can fork up." And he

threw down the gold to pay the fine.

Judge—"Mr. Clerk, enter a fine of twenty dollars."

"Wal, judge, here's the pewter, but if only we two are going to play this, put up your money if you do rake down the pile."

Judge—"Mr. Clerk, enter a fine of fifty dollars."

"Hold on, judge, that's too big an ante. The old hoss's got the lead, but I won't play if you don't put down your stakes—I draw the bets."

By this time the judge was savage, while the crowd were vastly amused.

Judge—"Mr. Sheriff, commit this man for contempt of court."

"Hold on, judge, *you're* too fast, or I be, and I guess it's me. I bid off the jail-yard, jail, and all, for the taxes, and I guess I own that are public institution, and you won't imprison a man in his own house, I reckon." This was said with a kind of drunken gravity that made it irresistibly ludicrous. The sheriff dragged him off, however, and the next day, when he was sober, he made a proper apology, and was forgiven. Equally ludicrous scenes have occurred among this free-and-easy people enough to fill a volume, but the class of men who were the actors are

rapidly disappearing, and in all the towns of ten or twelve years' growth, there are now good lawyers, good public buildings, and respectable courts, though conducted with none of that imposing ceremony which you see in Canada, or even in New England.

XXIII

ELK HUNT ON THE SAN JOAQUIN.

It was now in the month of May; during the preceding winter I had dug, washed, packed, traded, and hunted, and having accumulated a little capital, and business beginning to prove unprofitable in the mines, I determined to go below and get at an occupation less laborious and more profitable, or, failing in this, to return home. So, selling off rocker, tent, and frying-pan, reserving only my hunting mule and revolver, I started for Stockton, where I arrived about the first of June.

Matters there looked dull enough; business was overdone—establishments were going by the board, clerks were getting barely enough to support them, and the general tendency of affairs seemed—so far, at least, as I was concerned—to warrant an

immediate shipment to the States. Nearly a month, however, would elapse before a steamer would leave, and I looked around for something either of amusement or business, that would serve to occupy the intervening time.

A week went by, and nothing better than a collecting trip to the mines had offered, and I was thinking it about time to let my mule and gun accompany my other effects, when, on entering my hotel to secure my daily dollar-and-a-half's worth of what is there called dinner, I overheard a man say, apparently in reply to a question—"Three, and one of 'em the biggest buck you ever see; I shot him four times afore I killed him—his horns was that wide across (here he spread out his arms almost to their utmost extent), and I took fifty weight of gut fat off'n him."

I supposed he had reference to elk, and taking a seat where I could keep my eye on him, I waited for an opportunity to address him. Before, however, he had finished his story, the gong gave the signal for dinner, and when he took his seat at the table, I became his neighbour. Waiting until the first edge appeared taken off his appetite, I ventured to ask him if he had lately killed

any elk. At the question he eyed me for a moment, and then coolly observed that I "had the advantage of him." I replied that it was not so, for understanding that he was a hunter, I had taken a seat beside him, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with him, and of obtaining some items of information, which I supposed he was well qualified to impart. He seemed appeased by my reply, and extending his hand, gave mine a hearty shake.

"Well," said he, "ef I kin tell you anything in my line, jest ax it, and I'm at your sarvice. What mout your name be?" he continued.

I gave it him.

"What," said he, "are you the man of that name that lived on the Yuolumne last winter?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Why," said he, "I know you like a book, and perhaps you mout have hearn of me afore now; my name's Hardin, Jack Hardin, tho'f I'm mostly called Red, for short."

I had often heard of Red, and the wonderful stories of his adventures among the Indians; his exploits as a bear-hunter, and his modest and unaffected deportment as a

man, had thrown a vale of romance around his name—that when he made himself known to me, gave rise to feelings somewhat analogous to those of Fadladeen, when he discovered that the whilom poet was a king.

I expressed the pleasure I felt at becoming acquainted with one of whom I had heard so much and so favourably, and on my expressing a desire to take an elk hunt with him, he told me he would start up the river that night, and that he would call for me when he was ready. I gave him the direction to my lodgings, and we separated. I hurried to my room to make my preparations.

I was now going on a real elk hunt. About every animal in the hunter's vocabulary had fallen before my rifle, but an elk I had never seen; and as I cast a supply of bullets and put my revolver in order, my imagination was busy in sketching out huge animals with horns like tree tops, scouring over the prairies, or dashing through the woods like so many mastodons of old. This, thought I, is to be the trip on which the veritable elephant will exhibit himself; but by degrees my excitement in a measure subsided, and with forced calmness I made my final preparations for departing.

Night at length came, and with it came

old Red. As he took a seat he asked to look at my gun, and as he took my little revolver and turned it over in his hand, I saw that it was condemned, and without a hearing; but I too had once so condemned it, and I valued it now the more, that I had once done it so great an injustice. It was a seven-shooter, made by Van Dyke, of small calibre and short barrel, but for its size, the best "holder up" and the quickest killer I ever saw; and I felt satisfied the old man would change his opinion of it when he saw it used—nor was I disappointed.

We soon left for the boat, on entering which the old man handed me an oar, requesting me to pull until we got out of the slough. We soon made the river, and spreading our sail to a gentle breeze, about midnight we reached a bayou, turning into which, an hour's row brought us to our point of destination. Mooring our boat, we carried our blankets to a contiguous bank, where the breeze had free access, and disposing them about us, we lay down to sleep.

It was not yet light when the old man awoke me, and we immediately started for a point a mile or two distant, where the elk were in the habit of passing down to the marshes to feed. By the time we arrived

there, day was beginning to dawn, and leaving me, with instructions how to proceed in the event of discovering game, Red hurried on to another point, a short distance further.

Day at length fairly dawned; the sun rose bright and scorching. Far in the east, the snow-clad peaks of the Sierra Nevada rose, glittering and white, and in occasional spots undistinguishable from the masses of fleecy clouds which hung around them. Westward, Monte Díabole, black and frowning, loomed sharp and bold against the horizon, and, with the intervening woods, gentle sloping prairies, and tules waving in the wind, formed a picture of sublimity and beauty that the eye never wearied of gazing upon.

My position soon proving uncomfortable, I determined to proceed, slowly skirting the marsh, towards the old man's location, keeping on the way a bright look-out for game. I had arrived nearly at where I supposed my friend should be, when, through an opening in the tules to my right, I discovered an object moving, which I soon made out to be my friend, and, from his cautious manner of of progress, he was evidently approaching game. He soon disappeared behind a clump of tules, and I turned my course to intercept him, keeping a bright look-out that

I might not disturb the game. I soon came in sight of a small island, a mere spot of dry land, elevated some two feet above the surface of the water, and from which a good view could be had on almost every side; and I determined to make it, and there wait the issue of events. Taking off my pouch, which contained my ammunition, and carrying it in my hand, I reached the island safely, after a long and fatiguing wade, the water, in many places, taking me to the armpits.

The island was dry, and had evidently been much occupied by elk, as their tracks, deeply indented in the yielding soil, and the trampled grass, testified. Here I took my final stand. On the south, heavy masses of tules, approaching to within fifty paces of my position, intercepted my view, but in almost every other direction, the range of vision was unbroken. I was in momentary expectation of seeing the game, or hearing my companion's rifle; but the silence remained unbroken, save by the occasional splash of the beaver or otter.

I remained thus, as it seemed to me in my excited state, a long time, when I heard at some distance, and apparently in the heavy tules to the south, a splashing, as though

some ponderous animals were plunging through the water, and evidently approaching me; and ere long the shaking of the rushes indicated their position and number, although the animals, albeit they were now within long rifle range, were not visible. Suddenly they halted, and an occasional splash and a slight quivering of the rushes were all that gave evidence of their presence. I feared they had scented me, but it could not well be, for the wind was from the west, and they certainly could not have seen me; so, with all the patience I could muster, I composed myself to await their further approach. I had not to wait long; the sharp, whip-like report of old Red's rifle rang upon the air. A heavy plunge—a rush—the tules trembled—and bursting through the rushes, a noble buck staggered out into the open space, the life blood gushing in torrents from his open mouth and nostrils, and reeling for a moment, fell. Close upon his footsteps followed two worthy compeers, and, as their leader fell, "wrapt in astonishment severe," they paused. Covering the shoulder of the farthest one, I fired; the shot was answered by a convulsive bound, and turning short around, he sprang for the shelter of the tules. The remaining elk continued on his course, and

by the time I was ready to fire again, was some seventy or eighty paces distant, running quartering from me. Holding on the bulge of his ribs, I pulled on him, and at the report he stumbled and fell, burying his head completely under the water, but in a moment was up and off again. I did not fire again at him, as I knew he "had it right," and within a hundred paces of where he received the shot, and in my sight, he fell.

Old Red now emerged from the tules, wading waist deep in the water, and immediately came up to me.

"Well," said he, as he placed his foot upon the island, "you found your gun a little too poquito for 'em, didn't you?"

I pointed to the buck which he had killed, and which lay within forty paces, its side high out of the water. The old man looked at me for a moment, to see if I was in earnest, and then turned from me with a look of evident displeasure, and pointing to the animal, said—

"Do you see that ar bullet hole?" (the light frothy blood was yet bubbling from a wound close behind the shoulder), "a buck like that don't drap in his tracks when he's shot in a place like *that*, and it takes a *gun* to make a hole in 'em like that."

I now pointed to the one I had slain, remarking that perhaps that was the one I had killed, and, as Red looked, his countenance brightened.

"I knowed," said he, "that you was comin' some of your foolishness over me; but how on airth did you kill him—with that what d'ye call it?" and taking my gun, he looked at the muzzle. "Why, it don't run over forty or fifty, and my old thing goes just twenty, and sometimes I think it too small, at that."

I now told him I had killed or wounded another, and if he felt disposed, we would tak a look for it; but telling me not to be in a hurry, the old man drew forth from his pouch a pipe, and having filled and lit it sat down, and proceeded to give me at length a description of the habits, haunts, &c. of the elk, with the best mode of approaching and killing them.

"Whenever," said he, "you can get a close shot, take 'em right through the thick of the shoulder, but when you have to make a long shot, you may hold on 'em a little back, an' if you take 'em anywhere in the lights, you're mighty apt to get 'em, tho'f I've known 'em to live for hours when they cotched it too low or too far back."

Knocking the ashes out of his now exhausted pipe, the old man signified his readiness to go in search of the wounded elk, and we proceeded to the place where he had entered the tules. We had no difficulty in tracing him, for a line of broken rushes marked his path, and we soon found him; he had gone but a short distance, having been shot, as we subsequently discovered, through the heart. We dragged him up to the island, and soon had others alongside of him, and having dressed them, and placed the carcasses in a good position to drain, we left them, to be taken off in our boat the next morning.

In the afternoon, we got into a band of does and small bucks, and killed five.

The next day, with our game, we returned to Stoekton. I had the curiosity to have my two bucks weighed, and the aggregate result was eleven hundred and sixty-five pounds.

XXIV.

THE INDIAN SUMMER.

It must be a dry and impracticable mind that is not filled to overflowing with the beauty of our Indian summer, when every winding valley, every softly-swelling upland in the picturesque openings, is clothed in such colours as no mortal pencil can imitate, blended together with such magical effect that it is as if the most magnificent of all sunsets had suddenly fallen from heaven to earth and lay unchanged on forest, hill, and river. Not a tree, from the almost black-green of tamasack and hemlock to the pale willow and the flaunting scarlet maples, the crimson-brown oak, and the golden beech, not a shrub, however insignificant its name or homely its form, but contributes to the general splendour. Frequent showers, soft and silent as the very mist, cover the leaves with dewy moisture; and upon this glittering

veil shines out the tempered autumn sun, calling forth at once glowing hues and nutty odours, which had been lost in a drier and less changeful atmosphere. Low in the bosom of almost every valley lies either a little lake ready to mirror back the wondrous pageant, or a bright winding stream, seldom musical here where scarce a stone of any size is to be found, but always crystal clear, and watched over by bending willows, or parting to give place to tiny islands loaded with evergreens. The sharp crack of the rifle or fowling-piece seems like sacrilege in such scenes; yet the multitude of wild, shy, glancing creatures, that venture forth to enjoy the balmy air and regale themselves upon the abundance of nature at this season, tempts into the woods so many of those to whom the idea of game is irresistible, that we must take the sportsman with his fine dogs, his glittering gun and his gay hunting gear, as part of the picture, if we would have it true to the life; and we cannot deny that he makes a picturesque adjunct, though we hate the "barbarous art" that brings him to these sweet solitudes.

But not alone on the wild wood and the silent lake does the Indian summer shed its tender light, making beautiful what might

else have seemed rough and common-place. The harvest has been nearly all gathered, and the ploughing for next year's crop has made some progress, as the deep rich brown of some fields and the plough itself slowly moving in others can tell us. See those unerring furrows, those ridges, sometimes curving a little round some lingering stump, but always parallel, be the area ever so extensive. Or look yonder, beyond the line of crimson and brown shrubs that line the rough fence, at the sower, pacing the wide field with the measured tread of the soldier, that each spot may get its due proportion of the golden treasure; and keeping exact time with foot and hand, his own thoughts furnishing his only music. No hireling or giddy youth is entrusted with this nice operation. The foundation for next year's riches is laid by the master himself; but you may perhaps see the harrow which follows his footsteps attended only by one of the younglings of the house, whose little hands wield the slender willow wand which urges on old Dobbin; and whose shrill piping tones are a far-off imitation of the gruffer shouting of the elder. The adjoining field is like a fairy camp, with its ranges of tent-like stacks of corn, and a young maple left standing here and there as

if on purpose to supply the flaring red banners necessary to the illusion. "Fallows grey" are not wanting, to temper the general gorgeousness, nor parties of "huskers" to give a human interest to the picture. Here and there a cluster of hay-stacks of all sizes, covered with roofs shaped like those of a Chinese pagoda, give quite an oriental touch; while, close at hand, a long shambling Yankee teamster, coaxing and scolding his oxen in the most uncouth of all possible voices, will recall the whereabout with a shock as it were; reminding one that the prevailing human tone of the region is anything but poetical.

One very striking feature in our autumn scenery is one that was undreamed of in the days when people ventured to be poetical upon rural themes. Cowper sings with homely truth—

> Thump after thump resounds the constant *flail*,
> That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls
> Full on the destin'd ear. Wide flies the chaff,
> The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist
> Of atoms sparkling in the noon-day beam—

But we would listen in vain for the flail at the west, at least during the autumn. The threshing-machine has superseded all slower

modes of extracting the grain from the ear; and though a "machine" has a paltry sound, the operation of this mighty instrument gives rise to scenes of the greatest animation and interest. Half a dozen horses and all the stout arms of the neighbourhood are kept busy by its requisitions. One of the most active youths climbs the tall stack to toss down the sheaves; the next hand cuts the "binder," and passes the sheaf to the "feeder," who throws it into the monster's mouth. Round goes the cylinder, at the rate of several hundred revolutions in a minute, and the sheaf comes from among the iron teeth completely crushed; the grain, straw, and chaff, in one mass, but entirely detached from each other—the work of a whole day of old-fashioned threshing being performed in a few minutes. Several persons are busied in raking away the straw from the machine as rapidly as possible; and shouts and laughter and darting movements testify to the excitement of the hour. A day with the machine is considered one of the most laborious of the whole season; yet it is a favourite time, for it requires a gathering, which is always the signal for hilarity in the country.

So tremendous a power does not work

without danger; and, accordingly, the excitement of the occupation is heightened by the fear of broken arms, dislocated shoulders, torn hands, and the like—even death itself being no unusual attendant on the threshing-machine. But no one ever hesitates to use it on this account, since railroad speed is as much the foible of the backwoodsman as of his civilized brother. No inconsiderable portion of the grain is wasted by this tearing process; and the straw, considered so important by the thorough farmer, is rendered nearly useless; but the lack of barns in which to store the grain for the slower process of threshing, and the desire to have a great job finished at once, reconcile the farmer to all this. The birds profit by it at least.

XXV.

SKETCHES OF PINY WOODS CHARACTER.

READER, did you ever see a *raal* specimen of a piney-woods chap, who had travelled enough to give him confidence, and make him feel at ease upon a Turkey carpet? If not, just imagine the appearance of the present one as he stalks into the parlour of Col. Jones, whom he had called upon to sell a "right smart chunk of a critter beast." His bushy head of undefinable coloured hair was full six feet above his immense cowhide understandings, the lower half of the intermediate space being covered with a sort of home-grown and home-spun dirty-looking Georgia nankin-coloured fabric, not quite as coarse as the fellow's shirt, which he said was warped of grape vines, filled with oven-wood, and wove in a ladder. His coat was of the same sort, only a little more so, being

ornamented with a stripe of red oak brown and another of hickory bark yellow; but the vest was "just the article of dry goods to take the rag off the bush;" and then the cut and set of the whole suit was enough to give a tailor fits, and that was more than was ever given to the clothes.

The way he walked into the parlour was a caution to old folks; taking a seat on a divan, he began diving his hands into the inmost recesses of the aforesaid yallar trowsers, because he did not know where else to put such useless appendages, which were in his way powerful. His hat he hung upon one of the arms of a branch candlestick on the mantle, and his whip he spread out upon the centre table.

The entrance of Miss Lizzie cost him a desperate effort at politeness; but as the Col. would not be in for an hour, he had to fill up the time with conversation. Looking about him he discovered a piano, which he knew by sight as well as the boy did the letter A, but dog rot him if he could call the varmint by name. So he made bold to ax the gal if she ever fiddled songs on that long thing in the corner, cause he'd hearn old Sykes' gal make um go like thunder, that's a fact, Miss; she's a raal screamer—enough

to knock the hind sights right off a feller, what's got no old woman of his own.

Not liking to be out-done by old Sykes' gal, Miss Lizzie kindly consented to entertain the gentleman until her "dad" should return.

Piney yellow plush was mightily taken, but didn't think it quite equal to the music at his wedding. This announcement entirely knocked up all of Miss Lizzie's music, since it would be a vain effort to capture, although she might win her polite beau.

"Ah, how was that? do tell me. I do like to hear about a wedding, and everything connected with it—do tell me; if you will, I will try and sing you one of the sweetest songs in the world about a wedding, and here come my two sisters, who will be delighted to hear about yours, and what you had for supper, and all about it; for I must tell you, one of them is thinking now about her own wedding."

After a succession of the politest crookings of the back, in honour of the new comers, and after a little more urging, he spread himself, and began to cut loose.

"Well, you see, gals, I and Jule—that's my old woman as is now—she was miserable good-looking then—had done a heap of

courting off and on, but nobody thought we was as mighty nigh getting coupled, when old Missus Wade—that's Jule's mother like—made up a quiltin, one of the raal old fashun sort, you never seed the like on't, I'll bet my pile.

"Well, old Missus Wade is jist the *oncontankerest* best hand to get up a quilting supper as ever trotted round a stump in them parts—but, Lord help you! she'd no idea me and Jule had any notion of splicing—that is, doubling teams you know—joining giblets—or what d'ye call it—that arternoon; but me and Jule had talked the thing over a powerful heap of times, and had just fixed things up just ready to take 'em all in a heap on the last quarter stretch. So she sorter put the old woman up to have the quilting, and the way she coaxed to go in for the feed would astonish any them sort of things now-a-days, I reckon.

Well, I went over t'other side of little muddy clear big creek, on the dry fork of Rapid Run, and told parson Roberts if he would come over and just make me and Jule one, I would give him two days' work next corn-shucking time; and he said he would if the water got down in dry fork, so he could get his critter over, case he had got a *ram-*

foozleifycation in one of his dog-kickers, so he couldn't walk no way it could be fixed. Well, when I told the old hoss how Jule and the old woman had been poking in the sugar 'mong the flour, he 'lowed he'd come anyhow, if he had to go round the big swamp, and cross over Jones' Bridge by the new Zion Ebenezer meeting-house.

"So when the day came, the way the gals did shell out of them parts couldn't be beat, I tell you; and some of them were all-kill-fired smart to look at, mind I tell you.

"Well, when they all got a going it, I rode up sorter accidental like, and says I—

"'Hello there, house!'"

"'Hello yourself, Jim Billings," says the old woman; "light, and come in—there's none but your friends here, I reckon."

"'Why, what on airth," says I, "is the doings here?"

Never letting on as though I knowed the first thing about the gathering; and then the gals they all jined in, and 'lowed I mought as well hang my critter to a swinging limb, and come and string needles for 'em till the rest of the fellers come anyhow; and so I pretended as though I didn't think of coming at all, only as I was going by on my way down to Smalley's store to see what

would be the chance of getting some seed taters up from Augusta next week, and seeing a right smart gathering there, I thought I'd just see what they were all up to; but I couldn't think of stepping in, for I wan't fixed for't no how. But arter a while I concluded I might see some of the fellers up from about Smalley's, coming to the dance the gals said they were going to have, arter the quilt was out, and so I could find what the chance was for taters, maybe as how; so I concluded I'd stop, if they'd say nothing about my having my every-day dry goods on.

"So I tied my critter out, and came in, and the way I did string them needles and talk pritty, is one of the most onaccountablest hug-um-easy spreadifications I ever made—I jist crooked my eye over to Jule not to notice my crankums, and she took the hint, and led off the beautifulest of anything I ever seed.

"Well, about the time we'd rolled the thing for the last puff, somebody else sung out down by the bars—

"'Who keeps house?'

"I knowed right straight, it was parson Roberts, and I sorter looked over to Jule, on the sly, as to say—my filly, I'll be hugging you powerfully 'fore long, or I ain't Jim Billings no way you can fix it!

"And when the gals seed who it was, I said mighty innocent like—'I'll bet a peck of goubers, ready roasted, that the old parson is going over to see Aunt Sally Wilden's old man, for he is mighty nigh going off with one of them old turns that come nigh upon't upsetting his apple-cart last spring.' So says I—

"'Parson, you're on your way to see old man Wilden, ha? Well, light, parson, and come in a while, and I'll go over with you.'

"'Oh, yes! do get him in," says all the gals, "and we'll get up a ceremony.'

"'I'll act the feller, and marry any gal what'll have me,' says Mehitable Ann Eliza Jones Baily.

"'So will I!' says I.

"'I should like to see you try it!' says about six of 'em at once.

"'Well, I reckon you would,' thinks I; 'but there's only one gal in this crowd will git that offer.'

"Well, the parson he tied his critter and come in, and almost the first thing he ax'd Marm Wade, was, if she had a pack of keerds —'cause, you must know, he was jist one of the powerfullest preachers in Georgia, and he could jist beat anything that ever wore a shirt at Yuker, and he knowed I could take a hand 'bout equal to the next feller.

"Arter a while the fellers began to gather, and 'fore long the gals finished the quilt, and such a shaking, and pulling, and bowling, as you never seed nohow, I reckon; and old Marm Wade declared if any of them gals, seeing parson Roberts was there, and all ready, would get married, she would give 'em that quilt, sure as grease. So at that I gin Jule a wink, and she slipt out and got in the smoke-house, to put on her calico fixins, and I tuk my saddle-bags and made for the fodder stacks, to git my Sunday rig on. And I tell you what 'tis, Miss, I reckon you never seed a couple of chaps look much slicker than me and Jule by moonlight. So I tuk Jule by the hand, and walked right in among all the gals and fellers, just as they'd began to wonder what on yearth had become of Jim and Jule, and I tell you she did look mighty sweet, that's a fact, and they all seed right off that something was going to happen, case we was fixed up slick, that ar a fact. So says I—

"'Marm Wade, I should just like to have that quilt for mine and Jule's, if you are willing.'

"At that, I never seed anybody in my life so mightily knocked up all of a heap, since I know'd myself. She know'd some-

thing was come round, for I was dressed up rather more than when I first stopt in, and Jule had on her best, I tell you, with a string of blue diamond beeds on her neck that shined like stars; and she'd got shoes and stockings on, and that the old woman know'd well 'nuff she wouldn't do at home, 'cept on some extra 'easion, and so says she, arter looking at us about a minute, good, says she—

"'Jim Billings, are you in downright yearnest? and do you want to marry my Jule for keeps? cause if you do, you must jist do it right now; but if you're going to fool her, you'd better make your will 'fore you go out of this house.'

"Me and Jule both answered at once, that we'd just made it up to have the quilting to get the gals and fellers there, without letting on anything about the wedding, and we was in right-down yearnest about it.

"'Now,' says I, 'parson, cut loose, and let us have it over.'

"He went at it like a day's work, and, Lord bless you, it didn't take him no time hardly to make old folks on us; and then such a hugging and kissing, and pulling and howling, and jawing, you never seed, for you see they all liked Jule mightily.

"Soon as they'd got sorter over this heat,

the old woman told them they mought as well trot themselves into t'other room, and get a feed. Well, I never did eat in any of the big houses—'cause when we goes down to Augusta, we always carries grub along with us—but I should like to know if they ever have any better feed than that was."

"Oh, do tell us what you had, and how it was made. I assure you, I have no doubt it was at least equal to any other in anybody's house, big or little. Pray describe it."

"Well, you see, Miss, the old lady had spread herself to have a heap of good things. First there was a biled pig, stuffed with taters, and it was so tender you could just eat it without a knife, just as easy as falling off a log. And there was a sight of fried chickens, and gravy enough to eat with a spoon, and just as much bacon and greens as anybody could put under their belts; and there was tater-coffee and store-coffee—you could have as much as you could pour into your funnel. But the pies and cakes, they was all killing nice, I tell you; they had some cake they called plum-cake, though 'twant plums, but it was full of black-looking sweet things they tried to make me believe was raisins; but 'twant equal to the real huckleberry cake. And they had tater

pies and peach pies; I reckon you'd jist like to know how to make 'em?"

"Certainly; do tell us—I am very fond of good pies."

"So am I, and Jule can beat the nation making them sort. Now, to make tater pies, you stretch a piece of dough 'cross a plate, and then smear biled tater over it, with some milk and sugar, and it can't be beat. And peach pie, you take a piece of dough and stretch across a plate, and pour some biled peaches in it, and then you stretch another piece of dough over it, for a kiver; and when it's baked you can't tell what it's made on, 'less you peck a hole in it; and that's the way we had to do that night, 'cause there wore lots of all sorts of pies, with kivers to 'em. I reckon every gal and feller there eat nigh upon as much that night as they knew how to put under their dry goods; and arter supper, the way they did dance, was enough to make the fur fly in a tall coon-hunt. Jule she tried a while with her stompers on, but she couldn't stand it, case every now and then she'd tread on some feller's toes, and then he'd cuss, and so she down on one knee, and then t'other, and had 'em off in less than no time, while she and her feller was waitin' for a chance to cut in, and so

t'other gals, seeing how she did, they all come down on their marrow bones, as they come round, and when they had all got rid of their shoes and stockings, the way they put in the double licks, beat anything I ever saw afore in Georgia. And would you believe it, Miss, there was only three gallons of licker drank there that night; but mind I tell you, there was a right sweet chance of courting done 'fore morning, and I do 'spect Bill Fisher would have tied up to his gal that night, but when he got her in the notion, come to look round, d——n me if old parson Roberts—the old fox—hadn't cut out and gone, clear as mud; and 'fore next week, what do you think she done? why, she just nater'ly turned in and died; she did, as true as my name is Jim Billings, and Bill he jist took to drink, and ain't been worth a dog's runnet ever since."

XXVI.

OLD BLAND, THE PIONEER.

In wandering through the woods where solitude seems to hold undivided reign, so that one learns to fancy companionable qualities in the flowers, and decided sympathetic intelligence in the bright-eyed squirrel, it is not uncommon to find originals odd enough to make the fortune of a human menagerie, such as will doubtless form, at no distant day, a new resource for the curious. If any of the experimental philosophers of the day should undertake a collection of this nature, I recommend the woods of the west as a hopeful field for the search. Odd people are odder in the country than in town, because there is nothing like collision to smoth down their salient points, and because solitude is the nurse of reverie, which is well known to be the originator of many an erratic freak.

There is a foster relationship at least between solitude and oddity, and nowhere is this more evident than in the free and easy new country. A fair specimen used to thrive in a certain green wood not a thousand miles from this spot; a veteran who bore in his furrowed front the traces of many a year of hardship and exposure, and whose eyes retained but little of the twinkling light which must have distinguished them in early life, but which had become submerged in at least a twilight darkness which scarce allowed him to distinguish the light of a candle. His limbs were withered and almost useless, his voice shrunk to a piping treble, and his trembling hands but imperfectly performed their favourite office of carrying a tumbler to his lips. His tongue alone escaped the general decay, and in this one organ were concentrated (as it is with the touch in cases of blindness) the potency of all the rest. If we may trust his own account, his adventures had been only less varied and wonderful than those of Sinbad or Baron Munchausen. But we used sometimes to think distance may be the source of deception in matters of time as well as of space, and so made due allowance for faulty perspective in his reminiscences.

His house was as different from all other houses as he himself was from all other men. It was shaped somewhat like a beehive; and, instead of ordinary walls, the shingles continued in uninterrupted courses from the peak to the ground. At one side was a stick chimney, and this was finished on the top by the remnant of a stone churn; whether put there to perform the legitimate office of a chimney-pot, or merely as an architectural ornament, I cannot say. It had an *unique* air at any rate when one first espied it after miles of solitary riding, where no tree had fallen except those which were removed in making the road. A luxuriant hop-vine crept up the shingles until it wound itself around this same broken churn, and then, seeking further support, the long ends still stretched out in every direction, so numerous and so lithe, that every passing breeze made them whirl like green-robed fairies dancing horn-pipes about the chimney in preparation for a descent upon the inhabitants below.

At the side opposite the chimney was a sort of staircase, scarcely more than a ladder, leading to the upper chamber, carried up outside through lack of room in the little cottage; and this airy flight was the visible sign of a change which took place in the old

man's establishment towards the latter part of his life. A grand-daughter, the orphan of his only son, had come to him in utter destitution, and this made it necessary to have a second apartment in the shingled hive; so the stairs were built outside as we have said, and Julia Brand was installed in the wee chamber to which it led. She was a girl of twelve, perhaps, at this time, and soon became all in all to her aged relative. But we will put her off for the present, that we may recall at more length our recollections of old Richard Brand. The race of rough old pioneers to which he belonged was fast passing away, and emigration and improvement are sweeping from the face of the land every trace of their existence. The spirit by which they were animated has no fellowship with steamboats and railroads; their pleasures were not increased but diminished by the rapid accession of population, for whom they had done much to prepare the way. The younger and hardier of their number felt themselves elbowed, and so pressed onward to the boundless prairies of the far west; the old shrunk from contact with society, and gathered themselves as if to await the mighty hunter in characteristic fashion. Old Brand belonged to the latter

class. He looked ninety; but much allowance must be made for winter storms and night-watches, and such irregularities and exposure as are sure to keep an account against man, and to score their demands upon his body both within and without.

We have said that the house had a wild and strange look, and the aspect of the tenant of the little nest was that of an old wizard. He would sit by the side of the door enjoying the sunshine, and making marks on the sand with the long staff which seldom quitted his feeble hands, while his favourite cat purred at his feet, or perched herself on his shoulder, rubbing herself against his grey locks unreproved. Weird and sad was his silent aspect; but once set him talking, or place in his hands his battered violin, and you would no longer find *silence* tiresome. One string was generally all that the instrument could boast; but that one, like the tongue of the owner, performed more than its share. It could say,

> Hey, Betty Martin, tip-toe, tip-toe,
> Hey, Betty Martin, tip-toe fine:
> Can't get a husband to please her, please her,
> Can't get a husband to please her mind!

as plain as any human lips and teeth could

make the same taunting observation; but if you ventured to compare the old magician to Paganini, "Humph!" he would say, with a toss of his little grey head, "ninny I may be, but pagan I a'n't, any how; for do I eat little babies, and drink nothing but water?"

Nobody ever ventured to give an affirmative answer to either branch of this question; so the old man triumphed in the refutation of the slander.

Directly in front of the door by which old Brand usually sat was a pit, four or five feet deep perhaps, and two feet in diameter at the top, and still wider at the bottom, where it was strewn with broken bottles and jugs. (Mr. Brand had, by some accident, good store of these.) This pit was generally covered during the day, but for many years the platform was at night drawn within the door, with all the circumspection that attended the raising of a drawbridge before a castle gate in ancient times.

"Is that a wolf-trap?" inquired an uninitiated guest. An explosion of laughter met this truly *green* question.

"A wolf-trap! O! massy! what a wolf-hunter you be! You bought that 'ere fine broadcloth coat out of bounty money, didn't ye? How I should laugh to see ye where

our Jake was once, when he war'n't more than twelve year old! You'd grin till a wolf would be a fool to ye! I had a real wolf-trap then, *I* tell ye! There had been a wolf around, that was the hungriest critter you ever heard tell on. Nobody pretended to keep a sheep, and as for little pigs they war'n't a circumstance. He'd eat a litter in one night. Well! I dug my trap plenty deep enough, and all the dirt I took out on't was laid up o' one side, slantindicler, up-hill like, so as to make the jump a pretty good one; and then the other sides was built up close with logs. It was a sneezer of a trap. So there I baited and baited, and watched and waited; but pigs was plenty where they was easier come at, and no wolf came. By-and-by our old yellow mare died, and what does I do but goes and whops th' old mare into the trap. 'There!' says I to Jake, says I, 'that would catch th' old Nick; let's see what the old wolf 'll say to it.' So the next night we watch'd, and it war'n't hardly midnight when the wolf come along to go to the hog-pen. He scented old Poll quick enough; and I tell ye! the way he went into the trap war'n't slow. It was jist as a young feller falls in love, head over heels. Well! now the question was how we should kill the

villain; and while we was a consultin' about that, and one old hunter proposin' one thing and another another, our Jake says to me, says he, 'Father,' says he, 'I've got a plan in my head that I know'll do! I'll bang him over the head with this knotty stick.' And before you could say Jack Robinson, in that tarnal critter jump'd and went at him. It was a tough battle *I* tell ye! The wolf grinned; but Jake he never stopped to grin, but put it on to him as cool as a cowcumber, till he got so he could see his brains, and then he was satisfied. 'Now pull me out!' says little Jake, says he, 'And I tell ye what! if it *a'n't* daylight I want my breakfast!' And Jake was a show, any how! What with his own scratches and the spatters of the wolf's blood, he look'd as if the Indians had scalped him all over."

"But what is *this* hole for?" persisted the visitor, who found himself as far from the point as ever.

"Did you ever see a Indian?" said the wizard.

"No! oh yes; I saw Black Hawk and his party, at Washington ——"

"Black Hawk! ho, ho, ho! and Tommy Hawk too, I s'pose! Indians dress'd off to fool the big bugs up there! But *I* mean

real Indians—Indians at home in the woods—devils that's as thirsty for white men's blood as painters! * Why, when I come first into the Michig*an*, they were as thick as huckleberries. We didn't mind shooting 'em any more than if they'd had four legs. That's a foolish law that won't let a man kill an Indian! Some people pretend to think the niggers haven't got souls, but for my part I *know* they have; as for Indians, it's all nonsense! I was brought up right in with the blacks. My father own'd a real raft on 'em, and they was as human as any body. When my father died, and everything he had in the world wouldn't half pay his debts, our old Momma Venus took mother home to her cabin, and done for her as long as she lived. Not but what we boys helped her as much as we could, but we had nothing to begin with, and never had no larnin'. I was the oldest, and father died when I was twelve year old, and he hadn't begun to think about gettin' a schoolmaster on the plantation. I used to be in with our niggers, that is, them that used to be ours; and though I'd lick'd 'em and kick'd 'em many a time, they was jist as good to me as if I'd been their own colour. But I wanted to get some larnin',

* Panthers.

so I used to lie on the floor of their cabins, with my head to the fire, and so study a spellin'-book some Yankees had gi'n me by the light of the pine knots and hickory bark. The Yankee people was good friends to me too, and when I got old enough some on 'em sent me down to New Orleans with a flat loaded with flour and bacon.

"Now in them days there was no goin' up and down the Mississippi in comfort, upon 'count of the Spaniards. The very first village I came to, they hailed me and asked for my pass. I told 'em the niggers carried passes, but that I was a free-born American and didn't need a pass to go any where upon airth. So I took no further notice of the whiskerandoes till jist as I turn'd the next pint, what should I see but a mud fort and a passel of sojers gettin' ready to fire into me. This looked squally, and I come to. They soon boarded me, and had my boat tied to a tree and my hands behind my back before you could whistle. I told the boy that was with me to stick by and see that nothing happened to the cargo, and off I went to prison; nothing but a log-prison, but strong as thunder, and only a trap-door in the roof. So there I was in limbo tucked up pretty nice. They gi'n me nothing to eat but stale

corn bread and pork rinds; not even a pickle to make it go down. I think the days was squeez'd out longer in that black hole than ever they was in Greenland. But there's an end to most everything, and so there was to that. As good luck would have it, the whiskerando governor came along down the river and landed at the village, and hearin' of the Yankee (they call'd me a Yankee 'cause I was clear white), hearin' that there was a Yankee in the man-trap, he order'd me before him. There he jabber'd away, and I jabber'd as fast as he did; but he was a gentleman, and gentlemen is like freemasons, they can understand each other all over the world. So the governor let me go, and then he and the dons that were with him walk'd down with me to my craft, and gave me to understand they wanted to buy some o' my fixins. So I roll'd 'em out a barrel of flour, and flung up a passel of bacon, till they made signs there was enough, and then the governor he pull'd out his gold-netted purse to pay me. I laughed at him for thinkin' I would take pay from one that had used me so well; and when he laid the money upon a box slily, I tied it up in an old rag and chucked it ashore to him after I pushed off; so he smil'd and nodded to me, and Peleg

and I we took off our hats and gi'n him a rousin' hurrah, and I thought that was the last I should see on him. But lo and behold! when I got to New Orleans, there was my gentleman got there before me, and remitted all government costs and charges, and found buyers for my perduce and my craft, and like to have bought me too. But I lik'd the bush, so I took my gun and set off afoot through the wilderness, and found my way home again with my money all safe. When I come to settle with the Yankees there was a good slice for me and mother, so I come off to buy a tract in the Michig*an*. I come streakin' along till I got to the Huron river, and undertook to swim that with my clothes on and my money tied round my neck. The stream was so high that I come pretty near givin' up. It was 'pull devil, pull baker,' with me, and I was glad to ontie my money and let it go. That was before these blessed banks eased a fellow of his money so slick and you had to carry hard cash. So mine went to the bottom, and it's there yet for what I know. I went to work choppin' till I got enough to buy me an eighty; and I bought and sold fourteen times before I could get a farm to suit me, and like enough may try again before I die."

"But you were going to tell me about this hole."

"Oh, the hole! yes—that 'ere hole! You see when I first settled, and the Indians was as thick as snakes, so that I used to sleep with my head in an iron pot for fear they should shoot me through the logs, I dug that hole and fix'd it just right for 'em in case they came prowlin' about in the night. I laid a teterin' board over it, so that if you stepped on it down you went; and there was a stout string stretch'd acrost it and tied to the lock of my rifle, and the rifle was pointed through a hole in the door, so whoever fell into the hole let off the rifle and stood a good chance for a sugar-plom. I sot it so for years and never caught an Indian, they're so cunning; and after they'd all pretty much left these parts I used to set it from habit. But at last I got tired of it and put up my rifle at night though I still sot my trap; and the very first night after I left off puttin' the rifle through the hole who should come along but my own brother from old Kentuck, that I hadn't seen for twenty year! He went into the hole about the slickest, but it only tore his trowsers a little, and wasn't I glad I hadn't sot the rifle?"

XXVII.

WESTERN TRAVEL.

If at any time you envied me, setting forth upon my flowery path, you had better reverse the engine and go back some distance upon the track. Not but that Philadelphia was the same dear old city; not but that Baltimore and the Eutaw-house had the same friendly aspect (I pass over the *road* to Baltimore); not but that I found the road, through Maryland and Virginia to Cumberland, fine enough in stupendous mountain scenery and beautiful Potomac-lapses of water, and all that; but those Alleghanies! —those heartless, stony, chasmy Alleghanies, that reminded me (painfully) of my school-boy days, and "Old Grey Whack," as we used to call our now lamented teacher! Even now, I can scarcely look upon a hard-bottomed chair without some feelings of envy.

One little fellow, who was on the back-seat with myself, after some two hundred and forty bumps, gave it up, and for the rest of the night hung over the strap that is back of the middle-seat. The scenery of the Alleghanies, at night, possesses a freshness and wild Dantesque vigour that are perfectly stunning. You see nothing but the occasional lantern of a benighted teamster; but you are reminded by some one of the passengers, every few minutes, of the wonderful freaks of nature around you.

"Here's a place where a stage went over a few years ago; down that place—it's so black you can't see, but if the driver sheers his horses that way six inches, down *we* go; and it's only two hundred feet to the bottom —that's all!" (bump).

"Were they killed?"

"Killed! well, I should rather (bump) think so."

"There, now's another place just like it on (bump) t'other side. A teamster walked off there this day fortnight; fell on his back across a sharp rock, and broke right in two. When they (bump) picked him up, they pulled out about tew feet of his spiral-marrer."

Little fellow on the strap—"Oh, Christmas!"

"D'ye hear about the stage being robbed?"

"No! When?"

"'Bout six weeks ago; the trunks were all cut loose from the back, and when the passengers got to Union, I'll be go-blamed if they had any baggage!"

"Pleasant night, sir!"

"Well, I should think it was a lee-tle inclined to rain."

So we got to B——. At this place we found a couple waiting to be married in the hotel, with groomsman and bridesmaid. The bride, tall, ruddy-lipped, black-eyed, and altogether a very pretty young woman: the groom, a little diminutive "broth of a boy," about twice her age. After the ceremony, I came into the room with a cigar in my mouth (as is customary), and said—

"Perhaps you don't ———"

"Oh, yes, I like the smoke, and like to smoke 'em too." The bride said this.

"Will you allow me to offer you one?"

"Hey?"

"Will you have a cigar yourself?"

"Yes, thank ye."

"Will you?" (to the bridesmaid).

"No, I'll wait till she gets along some, and then I'll take a pull at her'n."

We leave B—— next morning (my friend

D—— and I), and here we take a temporary leave of each other. There are two stages nearly full; one has an inside and one an outside seat; so D—— takes the latter, and I climb into tho back-seat of a stage, and am fitted into the side of an old woman with a band-box on her knee, and a great Kentuckian fits himself into my side. Having a middle-seat I take advantage of my situation, and make an arm-chair of it, by resting my elbows on the old lady's band-box and the Kentuckian's arm; then I open "David Copperfield" on the back of the gentleman in front, and we go along "like bricks." So we ride a few hours.

"Capt'n," says the Kentuckian (he always calls me Capt'n), "will you allow me to put my legs in yours? I got a pain in my side ridin' all night."

"Oh, certainly."

"Consequence is," I am jammed so tight that I begin to think wedges will be called before I ever get my knees apart again. Then I commiserate those unfortunate Venetian captives who see the walls of their prison gradually closing upon them; then I think of poor people crushed under a falling building; then I begin to have the cramp in both legs; it gets to be intolerable; at last I wake up my companion.

"Kentuck, you *must* move a little."

"Certain, Capt'n."

The room so afforded gives me little relief; at last I hear the cheery voice of D——, from the top of the other coach—

"Come up here; plenty of room!"

And so I escaped from my purgatory. We rattle down merrily to Wheeling, and here we take supper.

* * * From the time I left Cincinnati until I reached Memphis, I heard of three explosions, one fire, and one sinking. Then we had the small-pox on board, and lay beside the "H——" at the wharf, on board of which there had been four deaths from cholera. I went to a trial in Memphis of a slave, who had killed three men with the thigh-bone of an ox in three single blows; and there was a fellow there, with the marks of a pistol-bullet in his cheek, disposed to be drunk and quarrelsome, who kept talking to me. Also the porter told me to lock my door at night, as there had been some robberies in town, and they suspected, in fact, almost knew, it was the man in number fourteen—my room being number fifteen—my *vis-à-vis*, by Jove! The porter had a pistol, with the butt just peeping out of his side coat-pocket. *That* indicated the charac-

ter of the land in which I happened to be. On board this boat there are two very ugly customers: one is a fellow on crutches, always drunk; and he has a paper on his hat with "fifteen hundred dollars reward" for a man who killed his uncle three weeks since. There is an old Col. C—— here, who was severely cut all over his face, a few years ago, by a gambler, in defending a young man from being pillaged; and, altogether, it is very romantic and pleasing! Beloved land of the pistol and bowie-knife!—what has been said of thee is not fiction! I do not take hear-say, but have the visible evidence all around!

XXVIII.

A NIGHT AND DAY IN PERIL.

ANY one who has travelled the Missouri river, could not fail to have been struck with admiration by the wild and sublime scenery which meets the eye in all directions. That part of the globe is its Eden, and without wishing to utter a blasphemy, I will venture to say, that our first parents could not have forfeited a nobler paradise on earth.

When I was much younger than I am at present, one of my adventurous schemes was a trading trip to New Mexico—then a rare, almost unheard-of project, but now more common and less dangerous by odds. There were four of us, one a Yankee from Maine, another a quadroon Indian, and a third a backwoodsman, like myself. He and I were old acquaintances, but of the others we knew very little, inasmuch as we had met them

only a few weeks previously by the merest chance. The quadroon was a stalwart fellow, with a development of muscle perfectly astonishing; his skill in the use of fire-arms, a weapon he was never without, and a huge knife, amounted nearly to legerdemain. His countenance was no particular passport to anybody's good graces, and I was not surprised that, try how I might, I could not like him. The Yankee was, in appearance and character, a type of some of his brethren —a little malicious, and not a whit too brave, though. However, my companions thought, coincident with myself, that, as they knew the country thereabouts better than we, could converse in Spanish, and were well supplied with articles for traffic—it was our interest to fraternize.

Just above the Council Bluffs—than whose grandeur and sublimity of aspect there is nothing finer—we met six Pawnee Indians, with whom we bivouacked over night. It was a dreadful night, in one sense of the word. We spread our blankets in a circle, sleeping, as it were, with our feet concentrated in the centre, our heads radiating outward. Our packs we used for pillows. The heavens were our roof, and the forest trees our curtains. It was decided that the

quadroon and the Yankee should keep watch while we slumbered, and they accordingly took their posts a few yards distant. All was soon silent as death, excepting the yelling, howling, and wailing of the wild beasts, to keep away which we adopted the usual precaution of a fire.

I had slept about three hours, as near as I could calculate, when I was awakened by a gentle pulling at my pack. There is no half-awake business in the lynx-eyed watchfulness of a dweller in the wilderness. If awake at all, he is sure to be wide awake, with every one of his wits to aid him at ten seconds' notice. I instinctively scented danger, not as the battle "afar off," but near at hand and immediate. I did not stir, for I knew too well that if an enemy were so close, the first movement made by me would be the signal for an unerring deathblow. The dusky light, cast forth by the half-consumed brush, revealed the swarthy forms of the savages, and that of my friend, in motionless repose; but I could not discover the guard in the furtive glance I threw around. The pulling at my pack continued, and I perceived that it was being slowly withdrawn from beneath my head. Still I feigned slumber. At length it was entirely withdrawn,

and my head was very carefully permitted to descend to the ground! I manifested a slight condition of disturbance, and, as if in the restlessness of half-broken sleep, changed my position. It was then I heard the voice of the quadroon utter the command—

"If he wakes, strike before he has time to breathe."

"I will," was the cool reply of the Yankee.

"Take this pack behind yonder rock while I go for the other one," said the quadroon.

"Make haste about it," whispered the Yankee, as he moved away noiselessly with my property on his shoulders.

The quadroon now crept towards my friend, who was sleeping nearly opposite to me, and as he turned his back I drew one of my pistols, without betraying my real situation. It was my determination to shoot him the moment he attempted to carry off my friend's property, but I was spared that trouble. Scarcely had the quadroon stooped over his intended victim, ere he fell. One of the Pawnees, like myself, had been watching him with an eagle's unquailing glance, and had, with the speed of the electric fluid, risen and buried his hatchet in his brain. The crunching sound of the blow made me

sick at the stomach, but I could not feel any compassion for the wretch who would deliberately rob his partner in the wilderness, and meditate his murder in cold blood. In a moment I recovered from the shock the quadroon's death had given me, and, springing up, made after the other robber.

I caught him returning to complete his work of plunder. He was in no respect abashed by my appearance, but coolly drawing his pistols, and taking his knife between his teeth, said, "He s'posed he'd have to fight me." Before I could give him my answer, the Pawnees were up and about us. Weighing the whole event in the balance against strict justice, I am constrained to admit that the Yankee deserved to die, but it "went against my grain," as the saying is, to take his life. In the wilds of the New World there is no law but that of might. Judges and juries are never found there, excepting the self-elected, self-constituted, order, and they have only to act sharply up to the stern requirements of the welfare of the majority. To punish the chief there, such as either the quadroon or the Yankee, slightly, would be productive of no service whatever. The light penalty accomplished, the thief would return to his work again, and

with it endeavour to wreak his vengeance upon the authors of his disgrace. In the wilderness extremes are altogether patronized. No man steals there who is not thoroughly desperate, and willing to take or yield life, as the chance may direct. Nothing, save moral law, of a very peculiar nature, governs adventurers like my associates and myself were. The Pawnees—children of the soil, as wild as the panthers they loved to destroy—had determined, in accordance with forest statute, that the Yankee must cease to live; and he was well aware of the fate in store for him. One of the Pawnees ordered him to lay down his weapons, but he refused. Ten seconds afterwards, he was prostrate upon the ground, dead, with five or six hatchets buried in his body. His goods, and those of his accomplice, were offered to us, but we declined having anything to do with them; and the Pawnees, with a few gestures of surprise, divided them among themselves. In the morning they departed, leaving us at the scene of the night's disaster. We buried the bodies of the ill-fated, treacherous men, and, sadly oppressed, slowly peregrinated towards a little stream entitled the "Elkhorn." Thus ended our night. How much more pleasantly

our day was spent, I presume my readers will ere long ascertain.

We forded the "Elkhorn," and struck into a region of country as rugged as the Alps, and as picturesque and terrific as original chaos. As I stated in my previous sketch, a human habitation is what the wanderer is always most anxiously in quest of. I should moreover inform the reader that, in taking this route, we deviated from that first marked out. We had obtained a license at Council Bluffs to trade above, and, in remembrance of the horrid circumstance I have detailed, we concluded to make use of it. We travelled over crag and precipice until after meridian without meeting a solitary sign in the vicinity of the existence of humanity other than that comprised in ourselves. Faint, weary, and hungered, we clambered to the top of the hill, shaded by tall pines, in order to catch the breeze, and cast ourselves among the tall crab grass, which grew around in abundance.

While reclining here, gnawing our hard and scanty fare, and marvelling as to what would be the ultimate result of our hazardous experiment, we heard voices; and our hearts bounded with delight when we discovered that they were not the voices of Indians.

O! mother tongue, with what power do you appeal to our tenderest susceptibilities! Tutored to fear nothing, we did not hesitate to search for the authors of the sounds which gave joy to our hearts. Hastily finishing our meal, we once more strapped our packs to our backs—they now seemed as light as the down of the thistle—and scampered over the hill and down on the other side. This led us into a large open space of quagmire, into which we sank to our knees at about every step. But every now and then the voices pierced the still air, and we toiled on cheerfully.

Half a mile of travel *through*—for I dare not write *over*—this morass ushered us into a forest of saplings, in which we made a path with little difficulty, only once in a while breaking the rest of a few lizards, or upsetting the equanimity of a serpent. We were used to these trifling annoyances. Crossing the sapling forest we emerged upon a prairie, and there—happiness unutterable!—stood a cabin. It was surrounded by men who were dressed in the rude costume of the trapper. They were hurrying from point to point, as if excited powerfully, and at very short intervals they would pause to huzza, or laugh in concert.

There was something wrong!—that was apparent. But what cared we—tired, shelterless, purposeless, and companionless, with the memory of two recent bloody executions dancing through our brains? Not a jot.

We reached the cabin. It requires no description, for one log-cabin is like all of its kind. I pioneered my friend, and the first salutation offered to me was from a diminutive, shrivelled backwoodsman, whose skin clothing was a mile too big for him, and whose hands—stretched forth to welcome us—resembled the talons of a huge bird, more than the digitals of a mortal.

"Hallo!" cried he, "whar from, strangers?"

"From nowhere in particular," I answered.

"Whar for?"

"Did intend to go trading in another direction, but the Indians were rather troublesome, and we changed our route."

"Got anything the red-skins like?" he inquired, eyeing our packs as inquisitively as a dog views a bone before him.

"Not that I know of."

"Oh!"

By this time the whole number were around! They comprised exactly a baker's dozen, and I must declare that, born and

bred as I was among squatters and trappers, I had never beheld such a ferocious and unseemly-appearing body of men in the whole course of my life. My friend, Jim Bowers (I should have given his name before), suggested that we had better continue our journey, as would be late and miss the accomplishment of the purpose for which we had started; but I knew that if our new acquaintances possessed any disposition to injure us, they would introduce us to their tender mercies the instant we made tracks from their vicinity. I therefore affected a social recklessness I was far from feeling, and replied that I wouldn't budge a yard from good company, that night at least.

This speech was received with a cheer, and I was immediately offered a cup of spirits. Truth to say, I required the draught. It not only restored what strength I had lost, but fortified my courage. Jim swallowed his share with the same good effect. We were then asked to eat, and upon accepting the invitation were shown to a flat rock, upon which stood an iron pot filled with an indescribable mess, which some people, at a loss for a term, might have denominated a stew. Our entertainers ate with us, and a very convivial repast they made of it. I was surprised

that they did not invite us to enter the cabin, and that they made no allusion to it. I observed that four of them, however, kept watch at its door and about it, and that every man was armed, as it were, to the teeth.

The shrivelled little note of interrogation kept his eyes so earnestly and constantly fixed upon the moveable properties in our possession, that I had my doubts of *his* honesty, at least. Notwithstanding my hunger, which had gained remarkable headway during the forty-eight hours previous, I could not relish the meal. Half the men were under the influence of strong drink (obtained no one could scarcely imagine how), and the other half were in semi-jocose mood, which was ever suggesting to their fancies such pleasant and humane recreations as throat-cutting and braining.

One of these facetiously related an anecdote of a combat he had, a year or two before, in a remote corner of Kentucky. After he had gouged an eye out of his adversary—kicked half-a-dozen of his upper teeth down his throat, and broken his nose, he got his ear between his teeth, and then expected him to "give in." To afford him the opportunity, he paused ere he forced his grinders together, but the fellow was "clear grit," and only

cried out to "go ahead—I can hear just as well without it!" The narrator concluded by declaring, with visible self-congratulation, that he did go ahead as commanded; but that he so admired the belligerent's bravery, that he yielded the fight and "treated." I do not pretend to say that I never heard of, or witnessed, scenes like the one related by this merry personage; I had; but the time, the place, and the men, made it appear like a new thing to me, and I was thrilled by an indescribable sensation of disgust and wonder. Alas! in the course of my life I have seen too many cruelties, and undergone hardships almost beyond credence. Retrospection, with me, embraces as many wonders as the history of Sinbad the sailor.

After the meal was despatched, a provoking and irksome silence prevailed. I was extremely desirous of penetrating to the bottom of the mysterious nature of this matter, but could not bring myself to the point. As often as I opened my mouth to ask what they were doing there, so often I shut it without uttering a word. The weasel seldom removed his eyes from Jim or myself. The party began to break up and move away in couples, but he remained a fixture. At last he was left alone with us,—that is, his

companions, although in sight, were incapable of hearing our conversation, if it were carried on in a low tone.

We endeavoured to appear at ease—to be resting from our fatigue—and to care nothing about what was going on.

Finally, the little man gave signs of being weary of inspecting us. He drew closer towards us. At length he spoke:

"You don't ask any questions!"

"No," said I, "we have none to ask."

"Don't you wonder what we're doing here?" he interrogated, with an air of surprise.

"I didn't" answered I, carelessly.

"Nar I," said Jim, following suit.

"But," I resumed, with a well-dissembled look, "now that you speak of it, what *are* you doing here?"

"Here on business!" was the curt response.

"I thought you didn't *live* here."

"Live here, stranger!" cried the anatomy, "why my land is fifty miles from here; a prettier clearing can't be found on the Missouri."

"Glad that you're so lucky," said I, and continued, "*My* clearing is hundreds of miles from here, and I wish I was on it."

"One does like to be at home," chimed in our friend.

"Yes," growled Jim, "I always make home the place where I am."

Another long pause succeeded this rambling chat. The little man broke it as before. He said,—

"It's a'most time for us to do our business."

I was about to exclaim, testily, "Well, why don't you do it," but my better genius prevented, and I inquired if we were in the way.

"That depends on circumstances," answered the Lampedo.

"Oh!" grunted Jim, emphatically, as he shuffled from his old position into a new one.

I drew a long breath and asked what those circumstances might be.

"They *mought* be e'enamost anything," answered the little man, with a grin over what he considered his wit; "but they are peculiar. You'll understand 'em presently."

The men had been earnestly talking among themselves all this while, and I had seen that Jim and I formed no inconsiderable portion of their topics. They appeared to be debating about some question, in which it was plain enough we were mixed up some way or another. In a short time they seemed to

have amicably settled whatever difficulty had existed. One of them came up to the little man, and saying—"All right—tell 'em!"—returned to his comrades.

The little man nodded his head complacently, and then, condescending to unclose his parchment-covered jaw, he addressed us again.

"WE'RE LYNCHERS."

Had he said "WE'RE ROBBERS" instead, I could not have experienced a more unpleasant shock than that which suddenly ran through my nervous system. Those who have never visited the regions of which I am writing, know nothing of the lynchers or their works. Time and time again have I beheld their transactions. In the majority of cases the decrees of the lynchers were just and unavoidable. In some cases they were fiendish, unmerited, and wicked in the extreme. Lynch law in new settlements—in the west and south-west—is not the lynch law of the north—of cities. The lynchers are the oldest and most respectable of the inhabitants. They are as systematically organized and convened as the senate of the United States. They are governed by rules as fixed as the statutes of the Medes and Persians,—have a constitution and laws,

written, to guide them, and conduct their proceedings with every sort of judicial importance. There is no insanity of the mob discoverable in their movements. They try, condemn, and punish a culprit with as much preparation and as coolly as any court in the United States. In arresting a person unfortunate enough to come under their notice, they go to all lengths. They will track him hundreds of miles—from state to state, territory to territory. If he delivers quietly up, he will get all the benefit of such trial as they award—if not, he must trust to the luck for a whole skin before they take him, and look for a speedy settlement of affairs after they have secured him. The lynchers supply the place of the authorities of the country. Where they are organized, one of Uncle Sam's officials is rarely if ever seen. Sometimes a judge or two will stray along once in a year, and hold a hurried session, which will amount to nothing excepting a farce. In the mean time the desperadoes who may have committed their various crimes to the detriment of the scattered, *only* self-protected, commonalty must be supported and guarded entirely at the expense and care of those whom they have wronged. To obviate these difficulties, and get some

species of law, the lynchers were instituted by the people. I admit that their code is bloody and barbarous, and that it is not sanctified by the government, but it has bloody and barbarous men to deal with—men who will burn a cabin and tenants to gratify a feeling of vengeance, or murder a whole colony for the sake of a few dollars, or their equivalent. Bad as lynch law unquestionably is, it is better than no law at all, and this is all the choice the inhabitants of those wilds have. Among the lynchers are ministers of the gospel, lawyers, &c. The little shrivelled creature with whom I held the conversation detailed above, was an itinerant preacher. I was told that he was a very fair one. In preachers, as in law, the new settler is obliged to be contented with the best he can procure. My object is to combine, in this brief sketch, truth and information with interest and amusement. Let no one be offended because I have stated that ministers are leagued with the lynchers, for such is the *fact*, to alter which is entirely out of my power, or any man's. Opposed to the lynchers, is a class of the community who are perfectly honest in their opposition, and who are organized for resistance. Many terrific encounters of the lynchers and their

opponents take place. They seldom end without causing the death of a fair share of each party, for both are alike composed of men who have no fear, and who will obstinately do battle, after commencing it, until they conquer or die.

The information imparted by my shrivelled interlocutor paralyzed the circulation of my blood momentarily, for even with my views of lynching and its immediate supporters, I did not like to come in contact with any of the doings of the latter. There is something horrifying in the idea that you are about to witness the arbitrary exercise of the self-imposed task of meting out fair and impartial justice.

I paused a while to recover from the shock of the abrupt and brief declaration of "We're lynchers." I comprehended the nature of the "business" before spoken of at once. Some poor creature had experienced the curse of their displeasnre, and they were on his track! I concluded to quit the spot incontinently. To stay there and be pained—or *bored* if not pained—by beholding a cruel execution, or scene of savage torture, would lend no lustre to my character, or aid me to dispose of my goods.

"You're lynchers," I answered (after tip-

ping a wink at Jim). "Then this is no place for us."

"Why?" cried rather than asked our tormentor.

"Business is better accomplished in private by the individuals interested therein. It don't become us to remain here and be acquainted with your proceedings."

"But you can't go now," said the little man.

"Can't go?"

"No—you will be benighted in the forest, and chawed up by the varmints, or murdered by the Indians, if you do."

"That," I promptly answered, is a risk we all expect to run. It will be but a proper penalty for venturing to thrust ourselves among you so unceremoniously. We shall depart now, without delay."

So saying we arose.

"We cannot permit you to leave us," said the little man, firmly, after scrutinizing us keenly.

"Why keep us here?"

"It is the wish of the company, therefore sit down, and swear you will not interfere in what may transpire, or breathe a word of what you see and hear to a living soul."

"Swear?" exclaimed Jim, interrogatively.

"Yes, or be shot, you can take your choice." And the diabolical skeleton grinned like a demon.

Finding a demurrer would be of no avail, we doggedly succumbed to our fate, and took the proposed oath, the lynchers, while we did so, handling their knives, as though they would like no greater amusement than that of cutting our throats, or chopping us into inch bits.

We learned, after undergoing this compulsory asseverating ordeal, that they had waited to take the sense of the meeting upon what was to be done with us. Their final resolve was as I have demonstrated it. Perilous enough had been our position, when our lives depended upon the mere caprice of a few of our fellow beings, and were saved by their vote.

We were now told that they *were* in pursuit of a culprit, and that the cabin before us was his abiding place. They had tracked him during a fortnight. The offences charged upon him were murder and horse stealing. They had his hut in a state of siege for some days. All this time he had maintained an obstinate silence, and had evinced no desire to compromise matters, or to give any satisfaction whatever. Their original determina-

tion was to starve him out, but this they had changed, and were now going to bring him out, *or burn him within his own tenement.* As there was no prospect of his falling short of edibles, I shuddered at the lanscape spread before my mental vision. Escape there was none. We could only remain, and endure whatever dismal scenes destiny should provide for us.

The business of the day was commenced by the lean man, who went to the door and thundered at it with the breech of his musket. We waited breathless for an answer, but none came.

Again the breech of the musket was applied to the door, and this time with an accompanying exclamation that any hearer would have declared, came from the throat of no cherub.

"Hallo! within there!" screamed parchment face.

No answer.

"We shall set fire to the cabin if you don't immediately come forth," he continued.

Still no answer.

"We are in earnest, you may depend," resumed the speaker.

Yet there was no answer from within.

"You are aware that we can break this

door through in five minutes. Be wise and come forth, or we shall burn the cabin, I tell ye."

But they might as well have discoursed to air.

"Boys, fire up!" commanded the little man, after waiting a few seconds to ascertain what effect his domestic eloquence had produced.

He turned away and joined his comrades.

"Perhaps the fellow's dead!" suggested one.

"No," responded the little parson, "not he; I've dealt with these chaps before. He's there snug! Come, light up! we've been fools to wait so long upon his motion."

In a very short time a pile of fagots was placed against the door and ignited. The breeze was light, and an immense volume of smoke rolled slowly upwards, and thickened the surrounding atmosphere. Soon the door began to crackle, and finally it was one living coal. The logs of which it were made were tough and green, and did not burn readily, else an entrance would have been gained sooner. The lynchers stood like so many statues, with their arms ready for use, watching every conceivable outlet, as a cat would enforce surveillance over a mousetrap. Not

a muscle moved in that stern assemblage. At length the door gave way, and a general cheer was the consequence.

"Let it burn on," said the little man, "if he can't come out now he may perish."

He had scarcely uttered these words when a human form bounded over the smoking embers, and sprang into our midst. Almost simultaneously, several of the lynchers set about extinguishing the flames. A ring was formed of the lynchers, Jim and myself included, about the man. He was athletic in appearance, beautifully made, with a skin as smooth and white as a girl's, and an eye whose fire shone like the sun's.

"At last we've got you," said Cadaverous, with a sickly smile.

"Yes, by besieging my property and burning it," was the reply.

"What's your name?" asked Cadaverous, while the secretary noted down the proceedings.

"James Thompson."

"Your age?"

"Twenty-seven."

"You are a stranger here?"

"I have lived here one year and four months."

"Where are you from?"

"Louisiana."

"You are charged with horse stealing and assassination," said Cadaverous.

"Both charges are false."

"Did you not kill Thomas Schooley?"

"Yes, in a fair and honourable duel."

"You lie—you murdered him."

"You are supported by your friends, or you would not speak as you do, nor any one of your company."

"Hum!" exclaimed Cadaverous, and continued. "Do you know that we are the lynchers?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not face us before?"

"Because it did not please me."

"You have confessed that you killed Tom Schooley, have you not?"

The young man refused to answer any more questions until he stood within his own dwelling, and some of their party, the lynchers, agreed to follow him inside. There they hemmed him in as before. The apartment was very roomy, and scrupulously clean, but was scantily furnished.

The rite of interrogation was resumed and finished. A couple of witnesses were called and examined. It was too apparent that the young man was a horse thief and an assassin.

Cadaverous, after consulting with his partners, said, in a voice whose tones were solemn and suggestive of dignity—

"James Thompson, we have found you guilty of theft and murder. Hear the sentence of the court. Five minutes will be allowed for your preparation, at the end of which time you will be hanged; and may God have mercy on your soul!"

The young man burst forth into a complete torrent of invectives. He called them butchers, robbers, and everything else that was opprobrious. He denied their right to punish him, and taunted them with being cowardly, and relying for conquest upon their numbers. The lynchers heard him calmly, until the five minutes were expired, when the little man merely said "*Time's up!*" and then every rifle was cocked.

"Do you think I'll be hung quietly and submissively, like a dog?" yelled Thompson, drawing his knife—"no, if you will have my life, you shall pay for it."

In an instant he was cutting savagely among his enemies. Half a dozen rifles were discharged, and the place was filled with smoke, which precluded the possibility of seeing what was going on; but I could hear the pantings and struggles and groans of

combatants. As for Jim and me, we remembered our oath, and did nothing save escape to the open air. We had hardly breathed the pure atmosphere for the space of a second ere Thompson rushed forth, covered with blood, followed by the lynchers. He ran about a hundred yards and fell dead, first burying his knife with a savage blow, three inches in the trunk of a young tree.

He had slain four of his assailants, and wounded two, one of whom was our shrivelled little friend. Jim found a rifle ball in the fleshy part of his arm. I discovered the perforation of two balls in my hat. We had had enough of trading expeditions, and the next day we were at Council Bluffs, on our way home.

I have never forgotten *my night and day in peril.*

Such is life or *death*, in the new part of the new world.

XXIX.

MIKE HOOTER'S FIGHT WITH THE PANTHER.

A YAZOO SKETCH.

"TALKIN' of panters," said Mike, "an' the seviegerous dispersition o' the varmint, the critter what camps out down in my deadnin' ain't to be beat no whar north nor south o' Satartia. You hosses in this here village makes er great hell-er-bellow 'bout seein' the elephant an' fightin' the tiger, an' all that kind er small suckumstance; but wait 'tell you've seen the sights what brother Hooter's seen, an' fout sich panter fights like this child has, an' my privit 'pinion is you'll stop braggin' right plum'.

"You must know," continued our narrator, "you must know this child ain't skeer'd o' nothin' this side o' no whar 'cept it's doin' er mean trick, an' when it comes to that I caves in. But when you talks 'bout er bar fight

or er leetle small fuss with er panter, an' all that kind er privit 'musement, I'm *thar!* They say Dave Brazeal's up to deer huntin', an' Sam Dougherty's purty fast arter a fox—but that's er small, slim bizzness—an' when they've cotch the varmint, all they gits is er piece uv his coat-tail an' some har. But bar an' panter shootin's worth a feller's while, an' thar this child's perfectually in town. Ole Ike Hamberlin use to be some in that line, an' so was Parson James; but, when I squat down in our clearin', Ike begun steam-docterin' fur er livin', an' brother James he tuk to preachin'. You never hearn none er that James' sermons, didn't you? Well, if you never did, jest go down to Claibornesville to camp meeting next time that hoss-fly spouts, an'—*sich* preachin'! whew! an'—sich hollerin'! Parson James could take the lint off all for *loud*, any day! An' when he cum to slappin' his hans an' stompin' his feet, an' foamin' at the gills—jest to see the shines uv them mourners! Sich shoutin' an' sich er 'nuther hollerin' an' screamin' 'mongst the wimmin! an' sich tarnation cuttin' up, an' wollerin' an' rollin 'bout in the straw an' shucks, you never hearn tell uv since you was kittened!

"Howsever, that ain't tellin' 'bout the pan-

ter; an', somehow or 'nuther, when I gits to talkin' uv my huntin' scrapes, Ike Hamberlin, an' sich like fellers, always pops into my noddle; an', 'stead uv tellin' the story, I flies off'n the track, an' commences talkin' 'bout my neighbours. Speakin' uv Ike, an' the way he use to steam-doctor them yaller chaps in the hills, 'minds me uv er tale Dr. Turnipseed use to tell on him 'bout how he got to be er doctor.

"You see Ike was 'rigionally er gunsmith, an' from tinkerin' 'bout guns he got to shootin' um—fust at his neighbour's cows an' the like, and from that he tuk to huntin' reg'lar. Howsomever that ain't the pinte. But one night he cotch cold from sleepin' with his mouth open, an' er steam-doctor 'vised him to take some 'NUMBER SIX.' Well, Ike swaller'd er whoppin' dose uv it, an' thar was whiskey in it, an' he kep er takin' it when he hadn't ought to, 'tell he got so much uv it in him that he cum precious nigh peggin' out—an' arter that he tuk sich er pertickler liken' to the med'cine—(though I always 'spected it was the whiskey that was in it)—that he cotch er fresh cold ev'ry day. To save expenses he thought he'd go to steam-docterin' hisself, so he mout have the med'cine handy in case uv axedint. So Ike

he quit gunsmithin', and borrid er spellin' book from one uv ole Dave Le May's niggers, an' went to readin'; an' from that he got him er 'Thompsonian doctor book,' an' went to cipherin' out how to practise physic. In about er week he thought he know'd 'nuff, an' went an' got him er jug er ball-face whiskey, an' some red pepper, an' dogwood bark, an' snake root, an' Injun turnip, an' jimston weed, an' what all; an' jumbled um all up in er mixtry together—an' that was Ike's 'NUMBER SIX.' Soon as his med'cine had time to soak some, Ike went to docterin' fur er bizzness, an' then he got too big for his breeches, an' kinder tuk the swell head, an' got to shavin' an' puttin' on er clean shirt ev'ry eight or ten days. 'Twasn't long 'fore he quit goin' to pra'r meetins, an' brother Marly said he b'lieve he hearn him one day cussin' his ole hoss for stumblin'.

"Well, the fust case Ike had to doctor was er feller down in Satartia, what cotch the bumfujjins from swallerin' too much tadpole soup. The fust dose Ike gin him, he walloped over on his belly, an' trimbled all over, jest like er free nigger on er frosty mornin', or er dyin' calf knocked in the head with er milk piggin. When Ike saw that, he know'd he'd made er impression on him, an' that his

med'cine was the very *thing!* Torectly the chap begin puffin' an' blowin' like er green lizzard on er hot fence rail, an' his mouth it flew open like er rattrap when it's sot. I seed it was all day with him, and, sez I, "Good bye, cow!"

"The chap died.

"Ike said it sarved him right, 'cause he didn't obey orders.

"The next ailment he went to doctor was er ole coon, what kep grocery in Satartia, an' swapped whiskey to niggers for chickens they'd stole. That ole studd tuk cold an' pleurisy from goin' in er swimmin' an' putin' on a clean shirt torecly arterwards. His skin was dry as er bone, an' all shriveled up like er cotton blossom arter er frost, an' his hands was as hot as er roasted tater. He axed for water, Ike said 'twasn't no use humourin' sick folks, for he'd want some agin, an' then he gin him er spoonful er "Number Six."

"The next thing Ike did was to souze him head an' ears right plum kerswash into er tub uv bilein' hot water. You oughter seen that chap when he felt the steam of it, how he wriggled 'bout an' play'd kerwollop in that tub! He put me in mind of er leather shoe-string in the hot ashes—but he soon cooled down as quiet as er nigger with er

ague on him doubled up on er pile o' hot cotton seeds.

"He's all right, sez Ike. Didn't I fix him in double quick time?

"Then you orter seen Ike swell at the gills an' strut 'bout like er turkey gobbler in layin' time; jest as if somebody'd gin him er new wolf-skin to make him er Sunday coat.

"Wan't that quick? said Ike. Doctor Rice be durned! he ain't no doctor side er me! Stan him up! sez Ike. But the feller was as limber as my shirt tail. He was dead!

Well, the way Ike got round that was, he told the people that the 'tarnal cuss was dyin'. when he got to him,—and was he any witch to raise the dead? When er feller's done flummuxed, he's flummuxed, said Ike, an' salt won't save him; an' what's the use of blowin' in er bellows what's got er hole in it?

"But all that ain't neither here nor thar,—continued Mike. Let me tell you 'bout the panter. I've read in newspapers 'bout some monsos cantankerous varmunts,—sich as the Bengal tiger what swollers er whole elephant an' is hungry yet,—an' the hyena that laughs when he's mad, an' uv the Mexico lion what's always mad when the white of his eye's black, an' that's always black; but they ain't er suckumstance—for the big, yaller-harr'd,

red-eyed panter what uses down in my neck o' woods licks um into fits.

"Why, if you'd seen that ar customer what I fout with long time ago, when my Sal was er leetle bit uv er runt uv er thing 'bout knee high to er three-legged stool, you'd er gin in kerslap. Of all the rambunktious critters that ever you spy, he tuk the rag off'n the bush! Why, if that feller Elliot Brazeal had er bin thar with them ar *stilts* uv his'n, what calls *legs*, if he hadn't er run, *pre*-haps thar'd er bin some uv the *tallest* walkin! *Je*-wili-kin! warn't he some? He was one uv the panters what you read about; an' if ole Jethro Clark er had er hand in that fight, an' no saplin close by for him to climb on-to, ef that panter hadn't er skeer'd the yaller out'n his keountenance, then Mike Hooter never shouted amen at er camp-meetin'—*he* didn't!

"But that aint tellin' you 'bout the fight," again observed our narrator. "You see," he continued, "it was summer time, an' the crap was laid by, an' we had nothin' to do but to do nothin' an' hunt varmunts. 'Sides, you see the varmunts was mighty fat, and my wife she wanted some bar's ile to slick the little niggers' faces with, to make um shine an' look purty as 'twant no use washin' um

—for water made um look kinder like they'd bin in the ashes. 'Sides I was arter bar I was, an' warn't thinkin' ov er panter. So I holler'd up the dogs, an' told John Potter, if he wanted to, to come erlong *his-self*. Arter we'd tuk a privit drink o' rale '*red-eye*,' we *put*, an' torectly the dogs they begin er barkin', an' a gwine it through the cane like flujins! 'Talk to him, honey,' sez I! An' they did talk to him, *they* did! Sich music! It beat 'Ole Rosin the Bow,' an' 'Sally in the Gardin',' all hollow. I thought my Sal was some for music, an' if you could hear her singin' 'Little pigs they lay in the hay all night,' an' me er pattin' 'Jubah,' I guess you'd knock under.

"Well, away the dogs went, waitin' on him close an' talkin' to him like er brother. Torecly they changed ther tune an' gin to sing out like they'd cotch up with him, and when I got thar I see the varmint had done tree'd in er sink hole. I know'd it warn't a bar, for thar was panter tracks, an' the whoppinest big foot ever you see. Well, I got down on my all-fours an' gin to spy into the hole, and the fust thing I diskiver was two uv the allfiredrst, biggest eyes, that glar'd like er coal o' fire, an' torectly I hearn him growl! Whew! I warn't no more skeer'd

than nothin', but the way I let drive into that hole with both barrels uv my ole gun, an' the way she lumber'd, was a caution, I tell *you!* The fust thing I know'd I didn't know nuthin', an' when I cum to myself thar was I settin' up in the fork uv er tree, an' my gun empty an' it down in the sink hole, an' the panter out 'mongst the dogs, goin' it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, an' fust t'other an' then one, an' a lickin' um up like salt! I *was* mad I tell *you!* 'Twouldn't er done for chaps to run upagin me then—I'd er chawed um up worse nor er calf can chaw er hosses tail,—I would.

"Well, you see," he continued, "it was the orfulest place for er panter fight that ever you see,—canes an' briers, an' the cussedest thicket. It was down back uv ole Jonathan Bonny's cane field. You know'd ole Jonathan Bonny? Thar was er feller lived down in the valley—(looked somethin' like you)—use to call him Bonathan Johnny, *for short*, an' sometimes he'd holler at him an' call him 'Old Spot,' jest to hear him swar—for Jonathan had er monsos curisome keountenance,—all freckled like er turkey egg—jest like natur had painted him sorter cream colour an' got mad for doin' sich er ondifferent job, an' then whopped er whole han' full

o' saw dust kerbim into his face, an' dotted him all over. He was er pictur,—*he* was. I tell *you*, ef he warn't the ugliest coon that ever clum er tree, you can take *my* ole cap—an' for turnin' milk sour, that face o' hisen could beat thunder! He had no more use for er lookin'-glass to see his purty in nor er billy goat has for collogne water. He had er wife, too, that was er few."

After this digression, there was another effort to bring Mike back to the recital of his story.

"As I was er sayin'," said Mike, "the panter he was in 'mongst the dogs, an' thar they had it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, an' as I had nuthin but er butcher knife, an' it was er mighty thickety place for er fight an' er whoppin' cantankerous panter, I hollered for John Potter to cum an' shoot him. An' what do you think the tarnation feller said? Why, he didn't say nare er thing, but thar he was, with his gun on his shoulder, er humpin hisself an' er cuttin' through the woods like er blue streak, an' er makin' er straight shirt-tail for home! Sez I, 'Cum here, you son of er gun!' But he didn't pay no more 'tention to me than if he was deaf. I felt wolfish, you may depend, but I didn't cuss none—I never cusses—but

ef I didn't *think*, d——n it, you can shoot *me!*"

Here Mike drew a very long breath, and seemed solicitous to dodge the catastrophe. But being further importuned, after refreshing himself with a horn of "red-eye' he proceeded.

"Well, as I said before, thar was I with er empty gun, an' thar was the panter in among the dogs, gwine it round an' round, fust one an' then t'other, dog er slappin' um about like dirt, an' the durndest fight you ever did see! When I see that my dander was up, I tell you; so I draw'd my ole butcher knife an' come down out'n that tree in er hurry, an' when I got down the first thing I did,—what do you think I did? Why, I blow'd my horn for the dogs, an' struck er straight shirt-tail for home, an' the dogs they foller'd. When I got thar, what do you think I see? Why, thar was that good for nuthin' suck-egg son uv er gun, John Potter, with my Sal settin' on his knee er kissin' him, an' he er tellin' her 'bout me an' the panter, an' er larfin fit to split! I didn't say er word,—'twasn't no time for jabberin'—but I tell you what I did do. I kinder grit my teeth an' pitched into him, an' I pledge you my word, I lammed him plum outen' his shirt!

"John Potter staid at my house er long time arter that, an' courted my darter, an' I gin her to him; but he never said panter to me since that lickin' I gin him—you can go your pile on it!"

THE END.

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